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The articles by J. C. Anene and B. E. B. Fagg were first read as papers to the Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria in December 1958. The article by R. E. Ellison is an abridged edition of the paper first read to that Congress.

The article by R. E. Bradbury was first read as a paper to the Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria in December 1959.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF BRITISH RULE IN "SOUTHERN NIGERIA" (1885-1891)

by

J. C. ANENE

THE BERLIN West African Conference 1884-5 was a turning point in the history of British relations with the districts of the Guinea Coast known as the Oil Rivers. Hitherto a precarious and vague form of unofficial responsibility had prevailed. This responsibility was reflected in the establishment of Consular jurisdiction backed by the occasional presence of naval forces. The presence of Consuls and naval forces might not have been enough to counter and nullify the challenge which French activities in the region suddenly precipitated. The basis of British claims to this portion of the Guinea Coast rested technically on the treaties reported to have been made with the various chiefs who dominated the communities of the coastal districts. The existence of such treaties was Britain's trump card in the proceedings and decisions of the Berlin Conference.

In a dispatch from Earl Granville, the British Foreign Secretary. Consul Hewett, was directed to sign treaties with the chiefs of the Guinea Coast from east of Lagos to, and including, the Cameroons. With the exception of the Cameroons, Hewett successfully accomplished this task of treaty signing during the months of July and August, 1884. Furthermore, a British Company, consolidated by the dynamism and inspiring leadership of Taubman Goldie, shortly before the Berlin Conference ingeniously bought out the French Companies on the Lower Niger.

Under these circumstances Britain had no difficulty in vindicating her claim to the Oil River Districts and the Lower Niger. The grounds of her claim were clearly indicated in a memorandum presented by H. P. Anderson, then a senior clerk in the British Foreign Office and a Member of the British delegation. Part of this memorandum is as follows:

"In the conduct of various expeditions which have opened the Niger and its principal affluent there has been no stint of life or treasure on the part of this country. The work so begun is now being completed by the enterprise of British traders, who have turned their special attention to the markets opened to them. The whole basin is at the present moment exclusively in British hands"¹

1. Parl. Papers. *Africa*, No. 4 (1885) C. 4279.
Also Crowe: *The Berlin West African Conference*, p. 127.

The support of the German delegation, who were pleasantly surprised to find that Britain was not necessarily opposed to German colonial aspirations, settled the issue of the Oil Rivers and the Lower Niger. The French had to be content with the Upper Niger. British freedom of action on the Lower Niger and contiguous districts was thus formally acknowledged by the European Powers.

In accordance with Article 34 of the 6th chapter of the Final Act of the Berlin Conference¹ the British Foreign Office on the 5th of June 1885 published in the London Gazette a notification which runs as follows:

"It is hereby notified for public information that under and by virtue of certain treaties concluded between the month of July last and the present date, and by other lawful means the territories on the West Coast of Africa hereinafter referred to as the Niger Districts were placed under the protection of Her Majesty the Queen from the date of the said Treaties respectively..."²

The notification also indicated that "measures in course of preparation for the administration of justice and the maintenance of peace and good order" in the Niger Districts would be duly promulgated and implemented. Here were the beginnings of what became a colonial protectorate. The British Consul Hewett and his assistant had had no difficulty in persuading the various coastal and Niger "chiefs" into signing the Treaties which formed the basis of the Protectorate of the Niger Districts. As to whether or not the "chiefs" understood what they were doing, it is significant and interesting to quote a letter in connection with one of the many treaties³ executed in the said district.

"I write as you request with reference to the word "protection" as used in the proposed Treaty that the Queen does not want to take your country...but at the same time, is anxious that no other nation should take them. She undertakes to extend her gracious favour and protection which will leave your country still under your government"⁴

The letter quoted above was an answer to the misgivings expressed by one of the Chiefs. Undoubtedly glittering presents had co-operated with ignorance to facilitate the process of accepting Her Majesty's favour and protection.

According to Mr Hall, the author of "A Treatise on the Foreign Powers and Jurisdiction of the British Crown", the term "protectorate" "...is one of which the meaning is somewhat

1. C. 4361 Accounts and Papers (Protocol and General Act).

2. *London Gazette*, 5 June 1885, p. 2581.
F. O. 93/16. See Treaties July—December, 1884.

3. See F. O. 93/10, 11, 16.

4. Parl. Pap. *Africa*, Vol. 74 C. 5365.
Also Burns, *History of Nigeria*, quoted p. 143.

indefinite or rather it may be said with more correctness to have different meanings in different circumstances and in the mouths of different persons.”¹ Most jurists make a distinction between two classes of protectorates: those proclaimed over “civilised” countries and those over uncivilised countries. The Niger Districts Protectorate belonged to the latter category which in due course received the designation of Colonial Protectorates.

A general statement as regards the evolution of Protectorate administration is impossible. The early examples of colonial protectorates, for instance in India, did not reveal any consistency of principles. Thus at the time of the establishment of the Niger Districts’ Protectorates there was no precise appreciation of the political relationship imposed by protectorates in Africa. During the Berlin Conference an attempt was undoubtedly made to formulate a specific official definition of a protectorate. We need not go into the intricacies of the controversy which the attempt had precipitated.² A formula had ultimately emerged when the British Lord Chancellor, Lord Selborne, commenting on a memorandum on the subject by the Law Officers of the Crown, observed that protection was “the recognition of the right of the aboriginal or other actual inhabitants to their own country with no further assumption of territorial rights than is necessary to maintain the paramount authority and discharge the duties of an occupying power.”³ Lord Selborne did not say what the duties of the occupying power were. These duties could mean anything. The situation left a vast scope for the interplay of many factors, sometimes altruistic and at other times indisputably and nakedly selfish. The Imperial agent on the spot had his own ideas about the duties of the protecting power.⁴ The merchants identified protection with the provision of trade facilities, especially those which were capable of undermining and neutralising the monopolistic practices of coastal middle men chiefs. In the Oil Rivers Protectorate, a few of the intelligent “chiefs” put their own construction on the meaning of protection which a Protectorate envisaged.

The first six years 1885-1891 of the Protectorate of the Oil Rivers demonstrated very clearly the great discrepancy which existed between theory and practice in a colonial protectorate. The ambiguities and contradictions which characterised this first period of official British rule over the Oil Rivers justify the description of that period

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1. Hall, *A Treatise on the Foreign Powers and Jurisdiction of the British Crown*, p. 204.
 2. Accounts and Papers Vol. LV, 1884/5. See Correspondences. Crowe. Op. Cit p. 177.
F. O. 84/1819. Report of the Law Officers 7 Jan. 1885.
 3. F. O. 84/1819. Report of the Law Officers 7 Jan. 1885. Lord Chancellor on the Law Officers’ Report.
 4. F. O. 84/1828. Johnston to F. O. Dispatches, 1887.
Also Minutes by The Legal Adviser (Foreign Office).

as a "Paper Protectorate". At the beginning of the protectorate relationship no administrative control was contemplated. The instruction to Consul Hewett made a clear distinction between protectorates and prospective annexations. "The chiefs will, as hitherto, manage their own affairs, but will have always at hand counsellors and arbitrators in matters of difficulty or dispute."¹ The period under review saw the progressive breakdown of the vague theory that the governmental paraphernalia usual in a colony or ceded territory were irregular in a protectorate. Perhaps Lord Hailey was right in the view that the status of different territories claimed by Britain "is determined or has been determined rather by historical accident than by legal theory".² The Oil Rivers Protectorate confirmed this view.

In examining objectively the early years of British administrative connections with what was destined to become "Southern Nigeria", it is necessary to bear in mind two facts. Firstly, there was the absence of any clearly formulated theory of a colonial protectorate. Secondly, the Oil Rivers territories were notoriously lacking in strong indigenous systems of government. The result of the co-operation of the two factors just mentioned was that what took place in the Oil Rivers depended substantially on the Imperial agent on the spot, with the Foreign Office trailing behind in approval or disapproval of what was done. The latter often with unmistakable hypocrisy.³ At the same time, there is no doubt that however vague the conception underlying the original theory of a colonial protectorate, it depended for its operation on the protecting powers finding a strong political organisation in existence.⁴

The second part of the notification, which in 1885 had promulgated the Protectorate of the Niger Districts, also indicated that measures for the administration of justice and maintenance of peace and good order were in preparation. In the event, a Royal Charter was, after tortuous negotiations,⁵ conferred on the National African Company to administer a portion of the projected protectorate. The area under the administrative control of the Royal Niger Company (as the Company was now designated) included the greater part of the Niger Delta and the territories contiguous to the Niger up to and beyond the junction of the Benue. The remainder of the coastal districts became officially the Oil Rivers Protectorate. This latter area began its separate political career in an atmosphere of

1. Parl. Pap. *Africa*, no. 1, C. 4279, 1885.

2. Hailey, *An African Survey*, p. 270.

Geary, *Nigeria Under British Rule*, see Appendix I.

3. F. O. 84/1828. Letters, Comments already cited (1887).

4. Hailey, *Op. Cit.* p. 405.

5. F. O. 84/1879. Correspondence re The Royal Niger Company. Also F. O. 84/1880. Goldie to Pauncefoot. 18 June 1885.

uncertainty and vagueness. The Foreign Office continued to hope that an accommodation between the Royal Niger Company and the African Association of independent Liverpool merchants might enable the Charter of the Royal Niger Company to be extended. This accommodation did not materialise and as a consequence Consul Hewett was instructed to return to administer the Oil Rivers. The Consul's commission authorised him to establish a Protectorate jurisdiction under the West African Order-in-Council issued in 1885.¹ The subjects of the jurisdiction were stated to be British subjects and "natives of Africa, being subjects of any native king or chief who, by Treaty or otherwise, consents to their being subject to the jurisdiction". Therefore, the Consul was empowered to promulgate Queen's Regulations for securing the observance of Treaties, and for the peace, order and good government of British subjects or British-protected persons. The above was indeed the most precise formulation of the theory of protectorate government made available to the Consul. The Consul himself found the formulation rather bewildering, as demonstrated in a later dispatch to the Foreign Office,

"Not having received a reply to my application asking to be informed what steps were necessary to carry out these instructions and fearing that I should incur your Lordship's displeasure by delaying longer... I issued a notice which I hope will be considered sufficient for the purpose"²

The Consul indeed set up consular courts in the river states belonging to "chiefs" with whom Britain had concluded treaties, e.g. Benin River, Brass, New Calabar, Bonny, Opobo and Old Calabar. The Consul's second endeavour involved persuading the chiefs to have their provisional treaties made more specific and intelligible. It was this attempt which provided the only opportunity for the Consul to commit himself to an elucidation of the word "protection". In reply to Jaja of Opobo, the Consul had explained "...that the Queen does not want to take your country or your markets... she undertakes to extend her gracious favour which will leave your country still under your government."³ The reference to markets is important in this respect that Jaja alone, of the coastal chiefs, had refused to accept the free trade stipulation in the revised Treaties.

Shortly after, Consul Hewett so completely changed his former view of protection that in a memorandum to Lord Rosebery he asserted that "Her Majesty the Queen, in assuming the Protectorate of territories, had in view as a principal object the promotion of the welfare of the natives... by ensuring the peaceful development of

1. *London Gazette* already cited. See pp. 1617 and 1917.

2. F. O. 84/1749. Hewett to F. O. No. 4. 15 April 1886.

3. Burns, *op. cit.* p. 143.

trade and facilitating their (commercial) intercourse with Europeans... it is not to be permitted that any chief should obstruct this policy in order to benefit himself."¹ The Liverpool merchants naturally reinforced the Consul's new interpretation of protection and alleged that Jaja indeed terrorised the natives over whom he claimed suzerainty in order to preserve the integrity of his trade monopoly.

In the incompatibility of interpretations indicated above lay the dilemma of Consular jurisdiction. Consul Hewett tried to gain the Foreign Office to his view by ingeniously suggesting that the omission of the free trade clause had been on sanitary grounds. Meanwhile, he imposed a fine of thirty puncheons of oil on Jaja for "breaking" his treaty with the Queen—a charge technically very untrue. When Hewett reported the action he had taken to the Foreign Office the reply from the Assistant Under-Secretary was typical and left the situation as hopelessly vague as ever:—

"You should not have imposed on him a fine of thirty puncheons of oil as a penalty for breaking the treaty but should have imposed it on the general ground that his exactions are arbitrary and vexatious. Under the circumstances, the only cause that can logically be adopted is to remit the fine for the present".²

In Bonny a problem of another kind confronted the Consul. Here the instability of native government revealed itself in a threatening civil war. To restore normality to the conduct of local affairs engaged Hewett's earnest attention. He quietly stepped in and, in his own words, "...appointed five chiefs to form the legislative and executive council to rule the country, giving them judicial powers to hear and decide all disputes, etc., between Bonny men and people of neighbouring tribes". Very wisely he reserved to himself the right to veto any law which the new "Local Authority" might enact.³ Hewett added a comic finale by imposing on Bonny a fine of 16 puncheons of oil for his services. The only appreciation of the anomaly of the protectorate jurisdiction which the Foreign Office indicated in respect of this episode was to observe that "Hewett is trying to settle many large questions under his system of benevolent despotism—deposition of chiefs, markets, tenure of land, administration of justice, etc."⁴ Hewett was, however, reminded that should he succeed in collecting the fine, he should credit all the receipts to the Imperial Exchequer.

In 1887 Harry Johnston became Acting Consul in the absence of Hewett on sick leave. An unequivocal Imperial agent had at last arrived. The contradictions of consular rule were under him to assume alarming dimensions and, indeed, to blaze into open rupture

1. F. O. 84/1749. Already cited. See Memorandum on Rosebery's letter.
2. F. O. 84/1749. Already cited. Lister to Hewett, 16 June 1886.
3. Ibid. No. 12, 12 July, 1886.
4. Ibid. F. O. to Hewett, 4 September, 1886.

in the celebrated dispute with Jaja of Opobo. The details here need not detain us.¹ Johnston carefully listened to the complaints of the Liverpool merchants against Jaja and reported to the Foreign Office, describing Jaja as "...one of the most grasping, unscrupulous, and over-bearing of mushroom kings who ever attempted to throttle the growing commerce of white men with the rich interior."² Johnston's attempts to undermine Jaja's suzerainty failed ignominiously. As a matter of fact, Lord Salisbury, to Johnston's great discomfiture, was quite prepared to receive Jaja's embassy. Hewett, on leave in England, thought that Jaja and the other chiefs should be given a sharp lesson so that (in his own words) "they will at the same time learn to respect the power and majesty of the Queen." The Assistant Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office observed to Lord Salisbury that "the cup of his (Jaja) iniquity is now full." Lord Salisbury, in spite of all the hysteria shown in the Foreign Office, observed complacently that:

"It is evident we can do nothing until Jaja's embassy has been heard... The whole case against Jaja is that he has broken faith: because unless he has made some promises to the contrary, we are not entitled to call upon him to admit our traders into parts of his country..."³

Another allegation by Johnston that Jaja was about to sell his country to France left Lord Salisbury unimpressed. Ultimately, by a very questionable and indisputably dishonest stratagem, Consul Johnston invited Jaja on board a ship for a parley and deported him to the Gold Coast.

The action of the Consul described by Lord Salisbury as "kidnapping" was the last straw. In December 1887, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office admirably summarised the paradox of British rule in the Oil Rivers. "The first question to be decided is as to our political status in these territories."⁴

In the face of the multitude of problems and contradictions which had so far made up the history of the Protectorate, the British Government decided in 1889 to appoint a special commissioner to investigate the affairs of the Protectorate and those of the territories under the jurisdiction of the Royal Niger Company.⁵

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1. Oliver, *Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa*, London, 1957. Also Anene, *Theory and Practice in a Colonial Protectorate*, (Unpublished thesis). Footnote 70, p. 56.
 2. F. O. 84/1828. Already cited. See Report by Anderson. Also no. 11, 28 July, 1887.
 3. Ibid. Letters, etc. August, 1887.
 4. F. O. 84/1828. Already cited. Minute by Pauncefoot on No. 27, 13 December, 1887.
 5. F. O. 84/1940. Instructions to Macdonald, 17 January, 1889.

Coincidentally, the years 1887 to 1890 also engaged the attention of the British Cabinet and the legal advisers over the question of amending the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, originally enacted in 1843. One of the Legal Advisers to the Crown bluntly stated what must have been obvious to all except maybe, the British Government. "It suited our policy...to pretend that the Native States...were foreign territory..."¹ A memorandum on Indian and African Protectorates by C. P. Ilbert laid down what he considered the general duties of the British Government as a protecting power. These included exclusive control over the foreign relations of the protectorates, and responsibility for the maintenance of internal peace. The basic legal problems of protectorates and paramountcy were eliminated by the Amending Act of 1890 which "provided the authority for governing the countries, although they were not British soil."²

While the legal powers of the British Crown in protectorates were being defined, the moral implications of territorial acquisitions in Africa were engaging the attention of European Powers assembled at Brussels from 1889 to 1890. The General Act of the Conference signed by the Powers on the 2nd of July 1890 contained a clause which recommended as a basic desideratum "the progressive organisation of the administrative, judicial...and military services of the African territories placed under the sovereignty or protectorate of civilised nations".³

Something then had to be done in respect of the Oil Rivers Protectorate. Lord Salisbury decided however to await the Report and recommendations of the Special Commissioner to the Niger Districts, Major Claude MacDonald. The year 1890 was therefore a kind of watershed in the history of British political connections with the Oil Rivers.

Three forms of administrative control were, without much conviction, being discussed by the officials of the British Foreign Office. The Oil Rivers District could be made a Crown Colony; the Charter of the Royal Niger Company could be extended to incorporate the district; lastly, a new Charter could be given to the African Association of Liverpool, the Chairman of which had declared that "we shall go with commerce in our hands and good feelings in our hearts to assist the natives..."⁴

1. F. O. 97/562. See Confidential 5719 for the Cabinet. Also Ilbert, Memorandum, 24 January, 1889. And Lyall, Note, 29 January, 1889.

2. Lucas, *The Partition and Colonisation of Africa*, Appendix II pp. 215-6. Lindley, *The Acquisition and Government of Backward Territory in International Law*, pp. 11-18 and p. 204.

3. F. O. 84/2010. Dispatches from Vivian and Kirk.

4. Report of Meetings—already cited, March, 1890. See speech by John Holt.

The Head of the African Department of the Foreign Office, H. P. Anderson, was very suspicious of the profuse professions of good intentions on the part of the merchants. In this, he was fully supported by the reports of local British political agents who invariably had opposed Company rule on the ground that "...the interests of justice, commercial morality and our moral obligations towards uncivilised or backward peoples have never been well served by a corporation of traders...".¹ Anderson therefore pressed for a Crown Colony system for the Oil Rivers which "we are assured on all hands... would pay its way".

There was no suggestion in the instructions to The Special Commissioner, MacDonald, that he was required to consult the coastal chiefs as regards the type of British control they were prepared to accept. The instructions had merely indicated that "... if you should report against the Charter, you should at the same time inform me whether, in your judgement, the Oil Rivers should be annexed to the Colony of Lagos, or should be endowed with a separate Colonial administration...".²

In the event, the Commissioner held "consultations" with the Chiefs of the principal coastal states, including Brass, Bonny, Opobo and Old Calabar. There is no record of the specific questions put to the chiefs by the Commissioner. The replies from Bonny and from Calabar are very revealing. The Chiefs of Bonny wrote as follows:

"...we have to inform you that we strongly object to the extension of the Royal Niger Company's Charter to our river, or an independent Charter to any other Company of merchants. We have therefore decided to become a British Colony".³

In Old Calabar, the chiefs wanted to know why there should be any change in the form of government and claimed that they "were quite capable of governing themselves subject to the protection of Great Britain".⁴

At the conclusion of his "consultations", MacDonald reported that it would be premature and inexpedient to organise a Crown Colony in the region and concluded that "the best form of administering the district, at any rate for some years, would be by a strong Consular administration, with an Executive to maintain order and assist in opening up the country by means of, when necessary, armed police or constabulary".⁵

1. F. O. 84/1882. Memorandum on the British Protectorate of the Oil Rivers, 1888.

See also Nigerian Pamphlets No. 3. (C. O. Library).

2. F. O. 84/1940. Instructions to Macdonald—already cited.

3. Ibid. See Confidential Report, Macdonald to Salisbury, 12 June, 1889 and Inclosures.

4. Ibid.

5. Report by Major Macdonald on his visit as H. M. Commissioner to the Niger and Oil Rivers, dated 13 Jan. 1890, pp. 93-95; also p. III.

The pretence that Britain had no business here beyond keeping order among British subjects was finally abandoned. The report prepared by the Special Commissioner, and accepted by Lord Salisbury, signalised the determination of the British Government to undertake from 1891 such measures, very tentative in the beginning, which led to complete and unequivocal Imperial administrative control of what was to become "Southern Nigeria".¹

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1. F. O. 84/1940. MacDonald's Report.
Also F. O. 84/2019. Reports and Minutes, May-December, 1890.
And F. O. 84/2110. F. O. Draft to Treasury, 9 February, 1891.

CHRONOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN THE STUDY OF BENIN HISTORY ¹

by

R. E. BRADBURY

THE SCHEME for the Study of Benin History and Culture is an experiment in inter-disciplinary cooperation. Its main aim is to discover how much can be learnt of the history of Benin through whatever sources and methods are available and practical, and so to lay a foundation for further historical studies in the central area of Southern Nigeria. This problem is being approached from three angles: that of the historian, who depends largely on archival and bibliographic sources; that of the student of art and material culture who is concerned with the material legacy of the past; and that of the anthropologist employing ethnographic methods of enquiry and observation among the living population of the area. A fully rounded study would demand the participation of at least two other disciplines—archaeology and linguistics—but it has not been found possible to fit them into the present Scheme.

Each discipline has its own problems, methods and standards of validity and much of the Scheme's work will have to be written up within the framework of the separate disciplines. The special character of the Scheme, however, lies in its attempt to synthesise some of the findings of each discipline in order to throw light on historical processes in a limited geographical area whose internal history is, as yet, largely a matter of speculation. The necessity for inter-disciplinary cooperation derives, of course, from the inadequacy of written sources concerning a people who, till the present century, had no system of writing of their own. The only contemporary written records before 1897 are those of European visitors to Benin who never stayed long enough to acquire a thorough knowledge of the area, the people or the language and who, in any case, were not primarily interested in giving an account of the country. Their accounts are, therefore, for the most part, superficial, of doubtful accuracy and severely limited in scope and detail. While,

1. As this paper has been written at Benin, away from documentary and bibliographic sources, it has not always been possible to give precise references. I am most grateful to Dr A. F. C. Ryder, the historian of the Benin Scheme, for providing me with certain information from documentary sources and his notes on the original Dutch version of Dapper. Any errors in the use thereof are, of course, my own responsibility.

as the only contemporary accounts, they are of great importance (particularly for the history of contacts with Europe) they are, by themselves, quite inadequate for the reconstruction of Benin history.

The only other direct accounts of the past are those of oral tradition. Traditions are, of course, subject to very severe limitations as sources of historical fact and, in themselves, are at least as inadequate as the written sources. Their interpretation can only be attempted on the basis of a very full knowledge of the culture and society and of the motives which lead to their being recounted and refashioned through successive generations. Hence the need for a thorough ethnographic study.

To the collection of direct accounts of the past, contemporary and traditional, must be added enquiries and observations among the Edo peoples and their neighbours about the forms and distribution of social institutions and cultural pattern from which it may be possible to make inferences about historical processes in the area. The material culture, too, is of great importance. The history of Benin art is itself an important aspect of Benin history and it is of further significance in that bronzes, ivories and wood carvings often purport to depict historical personages and events.

In this paper I am not concerned to show how these various approaches may be combined and their results synthesised to enable us to form a coherent picture of the past. While much material is already available its analysis is a long-term problem. It is, however, necessary to indicate that what we are likely to achieve will in many ways be more akin to pre-history than to history proper. The period up to the late fifteenth century is likely to remain the field of pre-history. From about 1470 onwards a few ascertainable dates and a few contemporary accounts will lend a greater degree of exactness to our findings. Even for this period, however, while it will be possible to distinguish broad phases of development in a number of aspects of Benin culture and society, and in its external political, economic and cultural relations, our history will be wanting in the detailed evidence of successive incidents, of individual and group character and motives, and of background circumstances which only adequate contemporary records can supply. Tradition may record major events but it rarely, if ever, explains their background or their effects convincingly.

The primary requisite for a historical study is some kind of time-scale, however tentative or relative. The problem of setting up a chronology for Benin history involves all the disciplines and methods at our disposal and at this point it is impossible to assemble and analyse all the evidence. Two chronologies have previously been published and both of them are based on correlations between traditional and contemporary sources. Before making a fresh attempt with a more varied and systematic approach it is perhaps worthwhile to review the work that has already been done in its own terms. That is what is proposed in the present paper.

The King-list: chronological order, genealogical succession and dates.

The obvious foundations for a Benin chronology are, on the one hand, contemporary written accounts and, on the other, the traditional list of kings of the present dynasty¹. The Benin people see the past in terms of what may be called 'dynastic time'. Insofar as they find it desirable to place an actual or postulated event on a linear time scale they link it with the reign of a particular Oba². Basically this conception of the passage of time is not very far removed from that afforded for, say, the English people by their own king-list but it differs from it in that there is no independent calendar against which the reigns of successive kings of Benin can be measured. Talbot,³ and Egharevba⁴ have tried to rectify this by supplying Obas with approximate A.D. dates.

Needless to say many Benin people are as hazy as many English people as to the chronological order and genealogical relationships of their kings, and few have any conception of the absolute time-scale involved. Most people know the names and some of the deeds attributed to the more prominent Obas and many have views about genealogical succession over certain sections of the king-list. Some Obas are credited with very long reigns, others very short ones, but few informants are prepared to estimate the number of years involved. Where they do so the figures are usually conventional. Other informants, particularly those whose lives have been bound up with the royal court, have a fuller knowledge of the order of succession and genealogical relationships, while a few, especially the priests of the royal ancestors, can (or could) recite the whole list. Comparing information from the best informants there is little disagreement. This is not surprising and is itself neither encouraging nor discouraging.

Three king-lists have already been published and these are given below together with a list collected recently from Esekhurhe, the priest of the royal ancestors. In the case of Talbot's and Egharevba's lists their own approximate dates are shown.

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1. The present dynasty is said to have been founded when the Benin people, having rid themselves of their former kings, sent to the Oni of Ife for an Oba. He sent his son, Oramiyan, but the latter returned to Ife after begetting a son, Eweka, who became the first Oba of the dynasty. This is, of course, not so simple as it sounds.
 2. There are traditions in Benin of kings before Oramiyan but at this point the dynastic conception of time breaks down. The pre-Oramiyan kings live in a timeless semi-mythical world and it is impossible to construct any kind of linear time-scale, however relative, from the traditions about them. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the Obas of the present dynasty.
 3. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, Vol. I, Ch. IV.
 4. Egharevba, *A Short History of Benin*, pp. 85-86 and passim.

<i>Roupell</i> ¹	<i>Talbot</i>	<i>Egharevba</i> ²	<i>Esekhurhe</i>
	Orhamiyan 1300	Oranmiyan 1170	
Eweka	Eweka	Eweka I 1200	Eweka
Omobesa	Omovberha 1340	Uwakhuahen	Ihenmwhien
	Egbeka	Ehenmihen	Uwakhuaemwe
Ewedon	Ewedo 1370	Ewedo 1255	Ewedo
Oguola	Ogwola 1400	Oguola 1280	Oguola
		Edoni 1295	Edali
		Udagbedo 1299	Dagbedo
Ouhe	Awhen 1430	Ohen 1334	Eronbiru
		(1330)*	
	Ezuaara 1450	Egbeka 1370	Egbeka
Ezoti		Orobiru	Ohen
Olua	Uwafe-Ekun	Uwai-fiokun	Uwai-fiokun
Ebowani	Ewuare	Ewuare 1440	Ewuare
	Ezoti 1475	Ezoti 1473	Ezoti
	Oluwa	Olua 1473	Olua
Ojolua	Ozolua 1480	Ozolua 1481	Ozolua
Esige	Esigie 1520	Esigie 1504	Esigie
Osogboa	Awrhogba	Orhogbua 1550	Orhogba
Ehenbuda	Ehengbuda 1570	Ehengbuda 1578	Ehengbuda
Ohuon	Ohuan 1610	Ohuan 1608	Ohuan
Ahejai	Ehenzai 1630	Ahenzae 1641	Akenzae
	Akengbayi 1650	Akenzae 1661	Ahenzae
	Akenzama 1670	Akengboi 1669	Akengboi
	(Akenzayi)		
		Akenkpaye 1675	Akengbedo
Akenbedo		Akengbedo 1684	Ore-Oghene
		Ore-Oghene 1689	Ahenkpaye
Nakpe	Ewakpe 1685	Ewuakpe 1700	Ewuakpe
	Obiozuere 1715	Ozuere 1712	
Akedzua	Akenzua	Akenzua I 1713	Akenzua
Erizoyne	Eresoyen 1740	Eresoyen 1735	Eresoyen
		(1733)*	
Okenbuda	Ahengbuda 1760	Akengbuda 1750	Akengbuda
Osifu	Loisa 1803	Obanosa 1804	Obanosa
		Ogbebo 1816	
Esemede	Osemede 1815	Osemwede 1816	Osemwede
Adolo	Adolor 1852	Adolo 1848	Adolo
Overami	Overami 1888	Ovonramwen 1888	Ovoramwe
		Eweka II 1914	Eweka II
		Akenzua II. 1933	Akenzua II.

1. This list was collected in Benin in 1898 by Captain Roupell and published in Read and Dalton (1899) and in Ling Roth, (1903) pp. 6-7.

2.* In two instances the dates in the list given in pp. 85-86 of Egharevba's *Short History* differ slightly from those in the text.

In terms of simple chronological order the three published lists are in general agreement. The differences between them may be summarised as follows:—

1. From Ewuakpe onwards the only disagreement is in the omission of Ogbebo by Talbot and of Oghbeo and Ozuere by Roupell. Both are frequently left out by informants as temporary usurpers. Usurpation is a matter of opinion and definition. Ewuakpe is said to have decreed that succession should henceforth be by primogeniture but, while this principle has been theoretically adhered to, it has not prevented succession disputes between several pairs of brothers. I have found no disagreement among good informants as to the order in which Ewuakpe's descendants reigned.

2. There is concordance between all three authorities in respect of Obas Ozolua to Ahenzae and between Talbot and Egharevba (and informants) from Uwaifiokun to Ahenzae.

3. The differences between the lists from Egharevba's Akenzae to Ore-Oghene correspond to a strange lack of tradition about this period. Talbot's Akengbayi is probably Egharevba's Akengboi and his Akenzama (Akenzayi) may correspond to Akenzae, though Egharevba gives the name Akenzama to Ewuakpe's father who never became Oba. Egharevba, who gives genealogical relationships between all the remaining Obas, before and after, cannot do so for this period. From Ahenzae to Ewuakpe, according to him, succession was neither from father to son nor brother to brother though it remained within the same royal clan. He further claims that most of these Obas reigned in old age but this may be simply an explanation of the short reigns attributed to them. The names of all these Obas are known to informants but the order of succession from Akengboi to Ore-Oghene is uncertain.

4. Of the Obas before Uwaifiokun there is general agreement between the published lists and informants concerning the order of those who are best known—Eweka, Ewedo, Oguola and Ohen. Oranmiyan is not usually considered to have been an Oba in Benin and the founding of the dynasty is normally attributed to his son Eweka. Omovberha (Roupell's Omobesa) seems to mean simply 'child and father' and may have been the informants' way of indicating a succession of Obas whose names were not recalled. Uwakhuahen, Ehenmihen, Edoni, Udagbedo, and Orobiru are little known, and Egharevba himself has nothing specific to say about them. Informants sometimes agree with Talbot in replacing Egbeka with Ezuara (or Ozuare).

It would be unwise to consider these three lists as being independent of each other. Roupell's was available to Talbot and both Roupell's and Talbot's to Egharevba. Chief Egharevba has informed me that his own list was compiled with the help of the late Esekhurhe, priest of the royal ancestors, whose duties included memorising the dynastic list and sacrificing to each Oba in turn at the

annual Ugigun rites, (though it is doubtful whether some of the less-known Obas were included in these rites). Clearly he was dealing with what should have been the best possible informant, though it is not always easy to tell where the Benin historian has reinterpreted his basic information. Many attempts have been made to check the list with other informants. A list recited by the present Esekhurhe (the son of Egharevba's informant) is given above and will be seen to differ from Egharevba in a few early placings only. Again, however, this cannot be treated as entirely independent evidence for Esekhurhe has himself consulted Egharevba on occasions and still tends to call for the latter's works when in doubt. It is in fact extremely difficult to be certain of getting independent accounts at this stage. Egharevba's books have been avidly read in Benin and even where an informant has not himself read the book he may have had it read to him or at least have been influenced by it, perhaps unconsciously, in conversation. It is unlikely then that Egharevba's king-list can be *proved* to be seriously incorrect from oral tradition though for the earlier reigns it is equally difficult to prove him right. This applies with even greater force to the problem of genealogical succession.

From Ozolua to Ohuan, it is universally agreed, each Oba was succeeded by his son, though not necessarily the eldest son. Tradition does not define the genealogical connections between Obas Ahenzae to Ewuakpe. From Ewuakpe onwards, omitting Ozuere and Ogbebo, there is no suggestion that any Oba was not the son of the previous one. From Eweka to Ozolua, according to both Egharevba and my informants, succession was from father to son or brother to brother but agreement on how this worked out in detail is by no means complete. I have the strongest doubts as to whether the genealogy of the early Obas can be accepted with any degree of certainty. We shall return to the genealogical problem later.

For two periods the dates given by Talbot and Egharevba are in fairly close agreement, namely from the last quarter of the fifteenth century to the first decade of the seventeenth; and from the second decade of the eighteenth up to the present century. In regard to the earlier of these periods both authorities lean heavily on the firm tradition in Benin that Ozolua was reigning when the first European visited the city. This is presumed to have been d'Aveiro who reached there in 1485 or 1486 and this date provides a fulcrum for both chronologies. Talbot gives little indication of how he arrived at his dates for the earlier centuries. A glance at them reveals that up to the beginning of the nineteenth century they are expressed in very round figures. With few exceptions the Obas are spaced out in multiples of ten years and his attribution of either twenty or forty years reign to each of the five Obas Ozolua and Ehengbuda to Akengbayi is clearly arbitrary, though it may be based on the Benin practice of reckoning in multiples of twenty.

Chief Egharevba has told me that his time scale is based on information given to him by the late Esekhurhe and another informant as to the number of years each Oba reigned, though he is prepared to admit that his dates before the reign of Ozolua are very approximate. I do not wish to dispute the fact that such figures were given to Chief Egharevba, whose industry and integrity deserve the praise and gratitude of all who are interested in Benin; his informants at the time he worked were in all probability better informed than any available today. But my enquiries concerning the years each Oba ruled have met with nothing like the precision which Egharevba's dating implies. Nor have I found evidence for a mechanical method of recording lengths of reign such as is described for some other West African kingdoms. As indicated above some Obas are credited with very long reigns (such as Esigie, Ehengbuda, Akengbuda and Adolo) and others with very short ones. Two of the senior priests of the royal ancestors were willing to say that Olua reigned for 6 years and Ezoti for 14 days. They were very uncertain about Adolo whom they gave 60 years and repeated the well-known saying that Ehengbuda lived for 200 years as a prince, 200 as Edaiken (heir-apparent) and 200 as Oba. When I put this to one whom I consider the best of informants he laughed unbelievably and said "How could any man live for so long? The truth is he lived for 60 years as a child, 60 years as Edaiken and 60 years as Oba." It is not therefore very easy to place much reliance in Egharevba's statement "It is said that Ehengbuda lived thirty years as (prince), thirty years as Edaiken of Urelu and thirty years on the throne."

If we are to evaluate Egharevba's chronology it seems wise to work backward from the nineteenth century, that is from the known to the less known. It is extremely frustrating to find that of the many European visitors to Benin between 1485 and 1897 very few indeed have left us the name of the Oba reigning at the time or, indeed, of any other Oba. Even where names are given the transliteration sometimes creates ambiguities and in one case the name is not identifiable at all. The earliest mention of an Oba's name is by Dapper whose book was first published in 1668. The Portuguese records have revealed no names, not even baptismal ones. Nor with very few exceptions do we get the names or titles of other Benin chiefs.

The period 1715 to 1897

When Ovoramwe's reign was brought to an end by the Benin Expedition of 1897 he had been Oba for about nine years. Punch, who was first in Benin City in 1889, says that at that time "It was more than a year after Adola's death and Adubowa (Idugbowa, the personal name of Ovoramwe) was full king." (Ling Roth p.102). Adolo is said to have had a long reign, usually described as 'forty years' though this is probably a round figure, multiples of twenty being a feature of Benin counting. Burton, who was in Benin in 1862, wrote:—

"Jambra is the second son of Oddi, or Odalla, the king of Benin in Belzoni's time (1823) who was described by Messrs Moffat and Smith (who were in Benin in 1838) as a robust old man... His elder brother is Bawaku, whose birth not having been reported in due time by his mother, the cadet became, according to the law of the land, the senior. When the old king died there was of course a fight. The chiefs and ministers preferred the milder and more easily managed man. Jambra therefore changed his name to Atolo, seized his father's property, and became Oba. Bawaku, whose temper is despotic, resisted for a time, but was presently expelled the country. He then fled towards the Niger and settled at Isan, a city said to be seven days march from Benin and three from Igarra. Since 1854 the brothers have been constantly at war."

"Jambra" is Burton's version of "Odin-ovba", the personal name of Adolo. His struggle with Ogbewenkon (Bawaku) is vividly recalled in Benin. Burton describes Adolo, at the time of his visit as "a strong young man of about 35". Baikie, quoting a Mr Snape, reported in 1854 that "the present King is a young man and succeeded to the throne about 1850".

The name Oddi or Odalla must refer to Osemwede though it is not obviously identifiable with his private name Erediae-uwa. There is no other contemporary reference to his name. In tradition he is chiefly remembered for his initial struggle for the throne with his brother Ogbebo who eventually burnt down the palace and committed suicide; and for the reconquest of Akure and much of Ekiti which is said to have taken place in the early years of his reign. These events are referred to in several contemporary accounts. Lieut. King, who was in Benin in 1820, says: "During the last insurrection the King was killed and a large portion of the palace was burnt down, but enough remains to bear witness to its former splendour". Fawckner who was there in 1825 describes the Oba as "a fine stout handsome man". He also visited the Ezomo who he tells us was a "youth of about 16... I afterwards found that his father, who held the situation, had recently been sent to conduct the war in the interior and had fallen in battle". (Fawckner, 1837,p.81) Benin tradition has it that Ezomo Erebo, who was in command of the Akure campaign, died before he could return to Benin after extending his conquests beyond Akure into the Ekiti country. A most interesting unsigned communication to the Royal Gold Coast Gazette of 25 March 1823 confirms that the war referred to by Fawckner was the one with Akure. The anonymous writer, whose account appears to have been hitherto unnoticed, tells us that "the whole place was destroyed by civil wars only a few years since, in consequence of a dispute as to the sovereignty; and the junior brother who was the favourite of the inhabitants of Benin, was deposed after a sanguinary conflict". He goes on to say that "the inhabitants of Eccoora have been in a state of revolt for five years and the Captain General of the Benin Army (i.e. the Ezomo) has

been in camp during that period.” From all this it appears likely that Talbot’s and Egharevba’s dates for the commencement of Osemwede’s reign are not far out.

There are no contemporary accounts of the reign of Obanosa whom informants credit with a reign of about twelve years. His father is said to have lived to a great old age, so much so that Obanosa used to pluck the grey hairs from his own head and send them to him as a hint of his impatience. It is necessary to go back to the eighth and ninth decades of the eighteenth century before we get any further contemporary records. Referring to his first visit to Benin City in the year 1778 Landolphe speaks of the Oba as being “about sixty-five years of age” but “without a single wrinkle on his face” (Landolphe Vol. I p.108). He also says (ibid. Vol.2 p.56) that no Oba died while he was visiting Benin, that is from 1778 (or possibly 1769 when he was first at Ughoton) to 1799 when he made his last visit. All this accords with Egharevba’s dates and the tradition that Akengbuda was one of the longest-lived of Obas. If Landolphe’s estimate of his age in 1778 is correct he would have been about ninety in 1804 when, according to Egharevba, he was succeeded by Obanosa.

There is, however, one account which is probably contemporary with Landolphe that does not seem to fit in. Capt. John Adams, whose book was not published till 1823, was apparently in Benin before the end of the eighteenth century, probably in its last decade. He describes the Oba as about 45 years old and gives him the name Bowarre which is not identifiable.¹ Both his account and Landolphe’s share the doubtful quality of having been published long after the events they describe took place but the latter’s is both fuller and more circumstantial.

In one of his most interesting passages Landolphe (Vol. II pp.58-9) describes a meeting between the Oba and his recognised heir, ‘Chiffau’. Chiffau is clearly Osifo, the personal name of Obanosa. Landolphe calls him ‘le jeune roi’ but makes no estimate of his age. The meeting almost certainly took place in 1787 or earlier and it is clear from the description that Osifo had already been recognised as Edaiken (i.e. the Oba’s heir) at the time and was living at the Edaiken’s court at Uselu. The practice was for the Oba to recognise one of his sons (in principle the eldest legitimate son) as Edaiken, while two or three of his other older sons would be given petty chiefdoms to rule over. This process was called *y’om̃o y’isi*. If the Oba failed to do it before his death the heir would be made Edaiken soon afterwards and would himself award chiefdoms to his junior brothers. Akengbuda is said to have been the last Oba to *y’om̃o y’isi* during his lifetime and this is regarded in Benin as an additional

1. It is possible that Adams had picked up the name of the much earlier Ob a Ewuare.

proof of his longevity. It is also said that he became too old to rule actively himself and that before he died his son used to sit with chiefs in the palace to judge disputes. The length of Akengbuda's reign is important for the evaluation of some information about the earlier part of the eighteenth century that has recently come to light, and which will be considered below.

Osifo is the last absolutely identifiable name of an Oba left to us by the chroniclers. A most useful date has, however, recently been established by Dr A. F. C. Ryder from the newly discovered papers of the Dutch West India Company which had an establishment at the Benin port of Ughoton from 1715 to 1738. These records have not yet been fully translated and studied but they do reveal that an Oba died in 1734 or 1735 and Dr Ryder informs me that this was probably the same Oba who signed an agreement with the Company in 1715. While the absence of a name makes final proof impossible it is nevertheless remarkable that Egharevba dates the accession of Eresoyen to 1735. The exactness of this correspondence may be coincidental but in the absence of evidence to the contrary it now seems very likely that Egharevba's dates over the last 250 years or so are substantially correct.

It is to be presumed then that the Oba with whom the Dutch company dealt in 1715 was Akenzua I, about whom there is a considerable body of tradition. His reign is linked with a revival of the fortunes of the kingdom. He is remembered as one of the wealthiest of Obas and this prosperity is said to have continued into the reign of his son Eresoyen who is also associated with a resurgence of the art of bronze-casting. Informants say that more brass was available at this time than ever before and a legend has grown up that in Eresoyen's time brass fell from the sky. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to link this tradition of prosperity and plentiful brass with the renewal at this period of intensive trade with the Dutch. The Dutch Company's records, indeed, make it clear that a considerable amount of brass was imported.

The early part of Akenzua's reign, however, is said to have been difficult. Before he could be installed he had to oust his brother Ozuere who had had himself made Oba. Ozuere was supported by the *Iyase*¹ of the day, *Iyase n'Ode*, who after Ozuere's defeat is said to have settled at a village some twenty miles to the north of Benin where he continued to maintain a hostile attitude. He was eventually defeated by Ehenua the first of the present hereditary line of Ezomo, or war-captains. According to the Ezomo family Ehenua was, in fact, an illegitimate older brother of Akenzua who had lived

1. The *Iyase* is the head of the non-hereditary group of chiefs known as *Eghaevbo n'Ore*. Though appointed by the Oba, the *Iyase* often seems to have become the leader of a wealthy independent faction in opposition to the Oba and palace chiefs.

as a youth in Ishan and later moved to the Isi district in the north-east corner of the present Benin Division. When grown up he came to Benin, entered the service of Akenzua and for his success in establishing the Oba's position was made Ezomo. The royal parenthood of Ehenua is not always accepted by other informants but the rest of the story is generally agreed both in Benin and in south-east Ishan and the Isi District. In Ewohimi, Ishan, I was recently shown an old carved wooden head which was said to represent "Ahenua". Up to 1897 the Ezomo remained responsible to the Oba for Isi and part of Ishan.

Now it is of some interest to compare this tradition with a passage in Nyendaël whose account was published in 1704¹ and who was himself in Benin in 1699 and 1701. Nyendaël writes:-

"The ruin of this town and the surrounding land was occasioned by the King causing two kings of the street to be killed, under pretence that they had attempted his life, though all the world was satisfied to the contrary, and thoroughly convinced that their overgrown riches were the true cause of their death, so that the King might enrich himself with their effects, as he did indeed. After this barbarity, the King found also a third man that stood in his way, who being universally beloved, was timely warned of that prince's intention, and accordingly took to flight, accompanied by three-fourths of the inhabitants of the town; which the King observing, immediately assembled a number of men from the bordering country, and caused the fugitives to be pursued, in order to oblige them to return; but they were so warmly received by this king of the street and his followers, that they forced them to return with bloody noses, and give their master an account of their misadventure. But he resolving not to rest there, made a fresh attempt, which succeeded no better than the former; but this was not all; for the fugitive, thoroughly incensed and flushed, came directly to the city, which he plundered and pillaged, sparing no place but the King's court, after which he retired, but continued incessantly for the period of ten years to rob the inhabitants of Great Benin, till at last, by the mediation of the Portuguese, a peace was concluded between him and the King, by which he was entirely pardoned all that was past, and earnestly requested by the King to return to his former habitation; however, he would not trust himself there, but lives two or three days journey from Benin where he keeps as great a court and state as the King".

These two accounts, the traditional and the contemporary, have certain features in common. 'King of the Street' probably refers to the chiefs known as Eghaevbo n'Ore of whom the Iyase is the head. The retirement of the rebellious 'street-king' to some distance from

1. Nyendaël in Bosman: *A new and accurate description of the Coast of Guinea*, London, 1705. The original Dutch edition was published in Utrecht, 1704.

Benin is consistent with the Benin tradition. The men from the borders who were assembled to support the Oba could be Ehenua and his followers. Thus Nyendaël may have been in Benin, if the traditional account is correct, shortly before the defeat of Iyase n'Ode. But this is mere speculation and it illustrates the difficulty of attempting to match contemporary accounts with oral traditions. One can only hope that the newly-found Dutch records will throw further light on this period—and it is already known that they make some reference to the Ezomo.¹ This should be Ehenua himself for according to tradition he lived on into the reign of Eresoyen.

In his pamphlet *The City of Benin*, (pp.10-11) Egharevba quotes Nyendaël's account with reference to the reign of Ewuare, which on his own dating is impossible for Nyendaël makes it clear that he is describing contemporary events. If it should prove that the traditional and contemporary accounts above do refer to the same series of events Egharevba's chronology would be seriously upset at this point. According to him Nyendaël would have been there in the latter part of Ore-Oghene's reign (1699) and the early years of Ewuakpe's (1702). Of the former the Benin historian tells us only that "there was a general peace and concord in the land during his reign".

Tradition shows the authority of the king in the early years of Ewuakpe as being at its lowest ebb. He is said to have been ostracised after causing many people to be killed but there is no suggestion of prolonged hostility with a rebellious "street-king". Egharevba does say however that Iyase n'Ode retired to the village of Ugha before Ewuakpe's death,² and it seems possible that the traditions of these two reigns may have become confused. If Ewuakpe became Oba in 1700 the situation Nyendaël describes would not have had time to develop by the time of his last visit in 1702. Again if Nyendaël's two visits were separated by the death of one Oba and the installation of his successor it is strange that he does not mention the fact. Nyendaël's account, thus, throws doubt on the correctness of Egharevba's accession dates for Ewuakpe or Akenzua I and it is possible that the commencement of Ewuakpe's, if not Akenzua's, reign should be put back to about 1690. It is not impossible that Akenzua's reign should have begun as early as this. Nyendaël describes the Oba he met as being about 40 which would have made him about 30 in 1690 and 75 at his death in 1735.

Ehengbuda to Ore-Oghene

Dapper, whose book was published in 1668, refers to an Oba Kambadje or Kombadje. Dapper was never at Benin himself and

1. Personal communication from Dr Ryder.

2. Egharevba *The famous Iyases of Benin*, p.21.

got his information partly from a Pieter de Mareez but mostly from a Samuel Blomert whom he says lived in Africa for several years. Unfortunately it is not clear if or when either of these persons were at Benin though the fact that Dapper's account is one of the best we have suggests that the information had not passed through many hands. Ling Roth traced the name of a Samuel Blomert (who had "distinguished himself in Java and then seems to have been lost sight of") in a work published in 1853. Whether or not this was the same man it gives us little clue as to the date at which he might have been in Benin.

Dapper makes two references to Kambadje. One tells of a Benin victory over a people known as Isago who bordered Benin on the west. The Isago are said to have attacked Benin with 1,000 horses but they were defeated and since that time had not attempted anything against the Oba Kambadje. The other speaks of the inheritance of Kambadje's wives by his son, the reigning Oba, and thus implies that at the time the information was collected Kambadje was already dead. The names in the traditional king-list which are most readily identifiable with Kambadje are those of Akengboi, Akenkpaye and Akengbedo but on Egharevba's dating all these would have reigned too late to be mentioned in a work published in 1668. Moreover, while Dapper implies that Kambadje was succeeded by his son, Egharevba states that none of these Obas was the son of his predecessor. This may not seem a serious discrepancy for the European visitor to Benin may have assumed that the reigning Oba was the son of the previous one. On the other hand Dapper goes into the question of succession in some detail, asserting that the crown passes from father to son or, in the absence of sons to brothers, but that the multiplicity of wives usually ensured a son. It is one of the sad defects of the early accounts that they almost invariably deal in generalities rather than specific instances. In Dapper's case it is rather difficult to tell where he passes from the general to the specific but he does state that a few years before the reigning Oba had had his brother and the latter's followers killed for trying to poison him, which suggests, (though it does not prove) that at the time the information was gathered a son had succeeded his father.

It seems just possible that Dapper's information derived from a somewhat earlier period than that of the three shadowy Obas named above and that Kambadje should be identified with Ehengbuda. The son referred to would then be Ohuan. If so the 1,000 wives with which Dapper credits him do not seem to have done him much good for according to the tradition he died childless.¹

1. There is something very odd about Ohuan. Tradition says that he was born a girl and that his father had him treated with medicine and made into a man. Then he sent him out naked into the streets to convince the people of his fitness to rule. The more sophisticated version of this story says that Ohuan was simply of effeminate appearance.

The description of the war with Isago is intriguing but the name Isago is not easily identifiable. No major wars are associated in tradition with the reigns of Akengboi, Akenkpaye and Akengbedo. Ehengbuda, on the other hand, was one of the great warrior Obas. In his reign is said to have occurred a war with Oyo in which the Benin armies were led by the Iyase Ekpenede. Dapper refers to the Iyase (Owe-Asserry or Siasseere) as the commander of the army but, of course, gives no name. The fact that the enemy fought on horseback and came from the west is consistent with it being Oyo (though directions in the early chronicles seem often to be suspect). On the other hand Dapper also mentions the kingdom of Ulkami which one more readily associates with Oyo. Whether he derives the two names from the same authority is not clear. The only possible link between Oyo and Isago—and it is a very tenuous one—is through the name Shango, one of the early legendary deified Alafin whom the Edo call Esago. In Pereira's *Esmeralda* (c.1506. See Mauny, 1956, pp.134-5) we read "To the East of this kingdom of Beny, a hundred leagues into the interior, they know of a country which today has a king called Licosaguou. He is said to be the lord of many and possessed of great power. Quite near there is another great lord who is called Hooguanee. He is considered among the Negroes like the Pope among ourselves". Despite the direction given Hooguanee is almost certainly the Oni of Ife whom the Edo call Oghene, and it seems probable, therefore that Licosaguou is Oyo. Talbot (Vol.I pp.281-282) assumes that this is so and associates the name Licosaguou with Shango. Here we are in the swamps of speculation but it is at least possible that Isago and Licosaguou both refer to Oyo. There is therefore a very slight justification for identifying Kambadje with Ehengbuda. Dapper's authorities would seem to have been in Benin at a time when its fortunes were good and the kingship strong and if any weight is to be placed on tradition this would apply more to the reigns of Ehengbuda and Ohuan than to those of the later candidates.¹ This does not put us much farther forward with our dating problems unless it should prove possible to identify the period at which Dapper's authorities were in Benin.

Though various groups of missionaries reached Benin during the seventeenth century none of them is known to have left any information that would help to date the successive Obas.

1. The only Benin bronze plaques which depict actual warfare show bearded Benin warriors dragging enemy horsemen with prominent facial markings from their saddles and despatching them. Are these the Isago? Mr William Fagg would date these plaques to the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Dapper himself, describing the palace, refers to "wooden pillars, from top to bottom covered with cast copper, on which are engraved the pictures of their war exploits and battles, and are kept very clean". Of the bronze plaques still extant only those mentioned above fit this description. But this does nothing to solve our dating problems.

The late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries are perhaps the most interesting and, at the same time, the most tantalising period in Benin history. There is little doubt that the first Portuguese arrived at Benin when its political and military fortunes and its cultural and social development were on the upsurge and this tendency was no doubt given additional impetus by the slave trade and the position which Benin soon came to occupy as the entry-point of European arms and trade goods for a wide hinterland. The Benin people attribute to Ewuare, Ozolua and Esigie the introduction of most of the political institutions and much of the economic, craft and ritual specialisation that continued to characterise Benin up to the end of the nineteenth century. There are more traditions and legends concerning these Obas than any other; indeed their fame is such that there is a tendency to attribute events to their reigns whenever there is a doubt about them—and this is, of course, one of the dangers of relying too heavily on oral tradition.

It is with these Obas that early contacts with Europeans are most closely associated in Benin tradition but the Portuguese records for this early period are unfortunately scanty and not easily evaluated. The information in them relevant to the dating of Ewuare, Ozolua and Esigie may be summarised as follows:-

1. About 1472 Ruy de Sequeira explored the coast to the south of Benin and according to Galvano it is possible that he visited Benin City.

2. d'Aveiro's visit to Benin in 1486, first mentioned by de Pina, has generally been assumed to be the first by a European. d'Aveiro possibly made a second visit to Benin and apparently he died in the area, though the date of his death is not known. According to de Barros and de Pina an ambassador from the Oba visited Portugal in the reign of Dom Joao II (1481-1495).

3. Missionaries were in Benin by 1515, if not before, for in October 1516 Duarte Pires wrote to the King of Portugal:- "It is true I am a friend of the King of Benin... We eat with his son... When the Missionaries arrived the King of Benin was very delighted, the Missionaries went with the King to the war and remained a whole year. At the end of the year, in the month of August, the King ordered his son and those of his greatest noblemen to become Christians, and he ordered a church to be built in Benin, and they learnt how to read and did it very well."

4. In August 1517 a Portuguese official in the island of Principe reported that a priest was going to Benin to convert the Oba "although he is not ruling, except through two of his captains, because he is a youth and under their control".¹

1. Personal communication from Dr A. F. C. Ryder.

In Egharevba's interpretation of this period two dates, 1486 and 1515, are of crucial importance. Given the tradition that Ozolua was Oba when the first Portuguese arrived, and that this was d'Aveiro, the argument is that Ozolua must have been Oba in 1486. The importance of the second date lies in the fact that Egharevba assumes that the war referred to by Pires, which was going on in 1515/1516, was the war with Idah, which plays such a big part in Benin tradition and marks the last occasion before 1897 when Benin City itself was seriously threatened by an external enemy.

Bearing in mind Egharevba's dates for the Obas Ewuare to Esigie, let us examine tradition a little more closely. There is no suggestion whatsoever that Europeans visited Benin in the time of Ewuare. On the other hand he is said to have introduced coral beads and red flannel cloth (*ododo*) to Benin for the first time, and these could only have come from European sources. One of the best-known legends of Ewuare tells how he went to the palace of Olokun, the god of the sea, and stole some coral beads. Ewuare is also credited with founding the Iwebo palace association which since his time has been in charge of all the royal regalia. Iwebo is divided into a number of 'apartments' each created by a different Oba and controlled by a group of chiefs. Ewuare is said to have created the first of these apartments for the specific purpose of looking after the newly acquired coral and red cloth. The working, stringing and control of valuable red beads, both of coral and stone, has remained in the hands of Iwebo up to the present day. The word Iwebo itself is often construed as meaning 'the apartment of the Europeans' but it is by no means certain that this was its original meaning.

It is tempting to suggest that the legend of Ewuare and Olokun's beads may refer to an early direct or indirect contact with the Portuguese. Ewuare's route to Olokun's palace is said to have been through Ughoton, the port of Benin to which the Portuguese first came. Ughoton was also the main centre of the Olokun cult and while it seems almost certain that Olokun was worshipped there before the Portuguese arrived, there are reasons for supposing that the emphasis on Olokun as the god of wealth may have been encouraged by the coming of new forms of wealth from overseas. It would be unwise to place too much reliance on speculation of this kind but Egharevba's date for Ewuare fits in fairly well with the first exploration of the coast south of Benin by the Portuguese and it is likely that European goods arrived in Benin before the Europeans themselves.

Equally intriguing and equally unsatisfactory are the stories which connect Ewuare with the cult of the supreme deity, Osanobua. The legend has it that Ewuare sent some of his close followers to visit Osanobua and that Osanobua himself came down to Benin three times. The three spots where he alighted are the sites of shrines up to the present day. Now the story has grown up—though I doubt whether it is a very old one—that these shrines are on the site of

former Portuguese churches. I do not believe that there is much evidence to support this except in one case. That the one exception had some connection with early Christianity in Benin is made likely by the fact that its priest, up to the present century, wore a brass cross round his neck. The problem of the Portuguese church, or churches, is, perhaps, susceptible only to an archaeological solution and it is to be hoped that this will be attempted before too long. It is, of course, very likely that the Benin people worshipped a supreme deity before the Portuguese came and that the name Osanobua was taken over by the Portuguese, as it has been by missionaries of more recent times.

In the traditions concerning Ewuare, then, possible links with early European activity in the Benin area are of the vaguest and most indirect kind. The tradition that the first European visited Benin City in Ozolua's time, on the other hand, is a very firm one—though Roupell was told in 1897 that this happened in the time of Esigie. There is, however, little else to connect Ozolua with the Portuguese. The only other story that I have heard is that Ozolua was suspicious of the Europeans whom he believed to be intriguing with his son Esigie, and that Esigie advised them to go away and return after he himself had become Oba. Esigie is said to have allowed the missionaries to build a church and to have learnt to speak Portuguese. It is also said that he had his son Orhogba educated by them. There are, too, various indirect suggestions that Esigie had a great deal to do with the early Portuguese. At Ughoton, the port, one is still shown the site of *Ugha-Esigie* (Esigie's Hall) where up to the nineteenth century European traders were received and had their feet washed. The attendants of this building were known as *ibierugha-Esigie*—‘servants of Esigie's Hall’. Again, there is at Benin City a ward known as Iwoki whose members had, among other functions, that of looking after the Oba's guns and cannon. The Iwoki date their foundation to Esigie's reign and some claim to be descended from Europeans called Ava and Uti. Ava and Uti are said, on one occasion, to have protected the Oba by standing with guns, one on each side of him and up to the present day, on ceremonial occasions, the Oba is flanked by two Iwoki with guns. The shrine of the god of iron at which the Iwoki worship is called Ogun-Esigie. It seems likely then that the Iwoki was founded to look after guns when they were first introduced, according to the pattern by which Benin City was divided into wards, each of which had special duties to perform for the Oba. Another tradition connects Esigie with developments of the art of bronze-casting and some informants have it that the organisation of the bronze-casters into a ward-guild dates from his reign. It is probable that at this period brass became available in greater quantities than ever before, as a result of European importations.

These and other evidence make the attribution of the early intense activity of the Portuguese at Benin to Esigie's reign fairly

convincing and it is, therefore, probable that Obas Ewuare to Esigie did, in fact, span the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. When, however, we examine Egharevba's dates for Esigie, in the light of points three and four above, we find ourselves in difficulty for if both of these contain accurate information it is virtually certain that an Oba died in late 1516 or early 1517. The war with Idah is one of the outstanding traditional events of Esigie's reign. The Attah of Idah's forces are said to have reached the gates of Benin City before being driven back across the Niger. Tradition is very clear on this matter and the course of the war can be traced through the traditions of many villages between Benin and Idah. Duarte Pires writing in 1516 states that missionaries went to the war with the Oba and Egharevba has assumed that this must have been the Idah war, though I have found no independent tradition in Benin that Europeans were present on this campaign. Another Portuguese at this time reported that to visit the Oba in his war-camp he had to travel eighty leagues¹ and, while he gives no direction, this is not an outrageous estimate of the distance from Benin or Ughoton to Idah—though it is exaggerated.

Assuming that the official on Principe had the right information (this is by no means certain) and that our general assumptions about this period are correct, the Oba who died in 1516 or 1517 could only have been Ozolua or Esigie. Benin traditions of Esigie's reign lend no support to the idea that he died immediately after the Idah war. On the contrary they suggest that this war occurred relatively early in what was to be a long reign. Ozolua, on the other hand, is said to have been killed at Uzea in north-east Ishan (which is on the way between Benin and Idah) while fighting a campaign against Uromi. On the face of it, it seems more likely that this, rather than the Idah war, is the one referred to in the Portuguese accounts, and that, therefore, Esigie became Oba in about 1517. Without further evidence, however, this remains a very speculative conclusion.

Despite the fact that European missionaries and traders continued to visit Benin throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries nothing has come to my notice which provides any clear evidence for the dating of any Oba. No deaths or accessions are reported and no name is given until that of the Kambadje mentioned in Dapper. According to Talbot (Vol. I p.158) there is a Portuguese record to the effect that an Oba of Benin visited Portugal in 1544 but the source of his quotation has not come to light. This alleged visit is not confirmed by tradition though some informants believe Orhogba went away with the Portuguese for some years, and it is universally agreed that he lived on Lagos Island for some time and founded a dynasty there. Research into early Lagos history and tradition may possibly throw further light on this period. It has been assumed that Orhogba was the Oba whom Windham's party met in 1553 and who

1. Personal communication from Dr Ryder.

could speak Portuguese but there is no written evidence to confirm this.

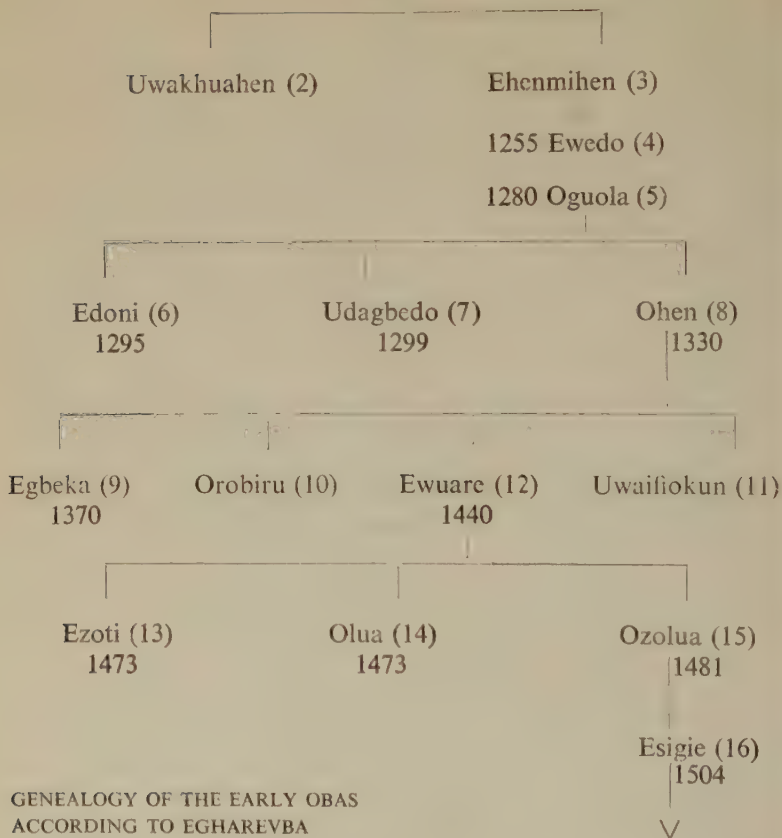
The period up to 1485

For the period from the beginning of the dynasty up to 1472 there are no opportunities whatsoever for cross-checking between traditional and contemporary sources. Tradition presents a mixture of myth and apparent reality with a few major landmarks such as the founding of the dynasty by Oramiyan of Ife through his son Eweka; the establishment of the palace on its present site by Ewedo; the building of the town walls by Oguola and Ewuare; and the founding of the Itsekiri kingdom by the son of Olua. Some of Egharevba's early Obas are, at best, mere names to most informants and some informants would differ from him in matters of order and genealogy. All agree that Ewedo was the father of Oguola who was the father of Ohen, that Uwai fiokun and Ewuare were the sons of Ohen, and Ezoti, Olua and Ozolua the sons of Ewuare, though Egharevba's order of seniority between brothers is not always accepted. Where there are differences there is no reason for preferring one version to another. Let us, therefore, examine Egharevba's chronology on his own evidence. The genealogy represents Egharevba's own conception of the way in which the title of Oba descended from father to son and brother to brother. Brothers names are shown in order of seniority and the numbers refer to the order in which the Obas are said to have ruled.

continued on the next page

ORAMIYAN

1200 Eweka (1)



The reigns of Egharevba's first fourteen Obas occupy about 280 years giving the not unreasonable average of twenty years each. If Eresoyen did succeed about 1735 the five Obas (excluding Ogbebo) who ruled between that date and 1888 reigned for an average of about 30 years each. Assuming that Egharevba and other informants are correct, different modes of succession obtained at these two periods. If Ogbebo is left out, succession in the later period was from father to son, and it seems likely that this pattern would make

for longer average reigns than brother-to-brother succession.¹ Even so Egharevba's average of 20 years for the earlier period is not outrageous, though some of his Obas, such as Ezoti and Uwaiokun, apparently reigned for very short periods.

Where brother-to-brother succession obtains, however, the length of a generation of rulers must be taken into account. From Eweka to Ozolua inclusive there were, according to Egharevba, 7 generations in 304 years, or 43 years per generation. For the four generations including Oguola to Ozolua the average is 56 years; and for the three generations Edoni to Ozolua 70 years. A figure of 43 years per generation is not entirely without the bounds of possibility if we assume that Obas went on having children in their old age. There is a certain internal logic in Egharevba's genealogies and dates in that the Obas of one generation are shown as the children of the last Oba

1. In the later period succession went theoretically from father to eldest son. In fact this principle rarely worked smoothly. In successive reigns Ogbabo and Osemwede, Adolo and Ogbewenkon, and Ovoramwe and Orokhorho contested with each other and each was able to claim some justification for the view that he was the rightful heir. The ambiguities that this implies derive from the ill-defined concept of legitimacy in this context and from the apparent unwillingness on the part of Obas to recognise their successors. According to the most prevalent theory an eligible heir must have been the first son born after his father had been recognised by the reigning Oba as his heir or at least after he had been accorded adult status. Children born to him before that time were to be regarded as "children the leopard begets and throws away". The latter were not always willing to accept this status however and when the time came they could usually find a faction to support them. Thus Ovoramwe's birth is said to have been concealed by Adolo from the Oba Osemwede. When Adolo died there was a brief struggle between Ovoramwe and his brother Orokhorho who had been born about the time of Adolo's succession. Ovoramwe who had built up formidable support won easily though his opponents claimed that he was ineligible on the grounds quoted above. On the other hand Ehigie, the eldest son of Ovoramwe, was apparently never considered as a candidate, on the same grounds.

It is doubtful whether any Oba after Obanosa received official recognition by his father as Edaiken, though some of them occupied the Edaiken's village of Uselu. The latent hostility which is likely to be present in some degree between a man and the son who will succeed him is probably intensified where an important title and a position of great power is at stake. This is evident not only in the institution of kingship but also in regard to other hereditary chiefs who sometimes seem to have delayed recognition of their eldest son's marriage as long as possible. This hostility is recognised by the Edo both directly and indirectly. A good example is the former rule forbidding the Edaiken to see his father or live in the same palace. Another interesting expression of this hostility is to be found in statements by informants that chiefs delayed their sons' marriages because they were afraid that the first son of the marriage might be a reincarnation of themselves, the implication of this being obvious.

The general effect of delaying recognition of a son's right to produce an heir would be to reduce the age of accession and increase the length of reign. Thirty years is in fact a very high average compared with many recorded dynasties. It is worth noting, too, that the Ezomo title appears to have been held for an average of about 30 years over the last eight generations.

of the previous one (though Ewuare, the last Oba of his generation is said not to have been the youngest). Nevertheless 43 years seem an unlikely average to be kept up over seven generations. Credibility breaks down when one is faced with 3 sets of brothers (from Edoni to Ozolua) occupying the throne for 209 years.

If we inspect the figures and genealogy more closely we see that the four brothers Egbeka, Orobiru, Uwai fiokun and Ewuare occupied the throne between them for 103 years. Of the first three, who held it between them for seventy years, we are told little. Egbeka "had very little, if any, idea of government"; Orobiru's reign "was full of peace and prosperity". Ewuare, the most famous of all the Obas, who is said to have governed with such vigour, conquered so widely, and introduced so many lasting innovations had apparently to wait for 70 years after his father's death before he could become Oba. Small wonder he was constrained to murder his younger brother Uwai fiokun who had, even then, got in before him! Ewuare, after waiting 70 years then proceeded to rule for another 33. How old he was at the time of his father's death we are not told.

Chief Egharevba willingly admits that his dates for the early Obas are very approximate and it is doubtful whether he could ever have been given figures for the length of reign of such shadowy rulers as Egbeka, Orobiru, Edoni, Udagbedo, Uwakhuahen and Ehenmihen. In fact he gives no length of reign or date of installation for Orobiru and Uwai fiokun and Uwakhuahen and Ehenmihen; and no length of reign for Egbeka or Eweka I. It is obviously impossible that anyone could have remembered how long groups of three Obas reigned and not the length of each reign separately.

One must conclude, then, that Chief Egharevba, in his admirable attempt to record his country's history, has, for the earlier period at least, gone much farther than his information warrants. On the evidence he gives his chronology is not tenable, and my own opinion is that oral tradition cannot provide, for the period up to 1485 a detailed chronology of the kind that Egharevba aims at. In the first place we have no means of knowing how accurate is the king-list or the genealogy posited. It is in the nature of tradition that its carriers should seek to impose a degree of order on the amorphous and unrecorded past which it does not necessarily possess. Although it is strongly held that Ewuakpe introduced the principle of primogeniture it is evident that both Egharevba and my informants tend to look at the earliest period of history with this conception at the back of their minds. With few exceptions he makes the eldest son succeed his father and with the exception of Ewuare/Uwai fiokun the latter's brothers follow him in order of seniority. Ezoti would have been succeeded by his eldest son if Ozolua had not killed the latter, we are told. A mode of succession in which the Obas of one generation are the sons of the *last* Oba of the previous one strikes the anthropologist as unlikely. It does not conform to the custom in Yoruba country whence the dynasty

presumably came, and it has no justification in Edo social organisation.¹

Conclusions

In this paper we have pursued the limited aim of evaluating the chronologies of Talbot and Egharevba in the terms in which they were arrived at. This is not the only approach and we have by no means exhausted the evidence that can be brought to bear upon this problem. We have been led to some useful if tentative conclusions:-

(1) For the period from 1715 onwards we can be fairly certain that both Talbot and Egharevba are approximately correct in their dates. From Eresoyen onwards the accession of each Oba, except for Akengbuda, can be dated fairly precisely. It is no small achievement on the part of Egharevba to have achieved such accuracy over a period of some 250 years and if it was indeed Akenzua who died in 1734 or 1735 his accuracy at this point is almost bewildering.

(2) There is sufficient evidence from traditional sources to assume that Obas Ewuare to Orhogba covered the late fifteenth and most of the sixteenth century though it is not possible to date any of them very certainly. Much depends on whether the suggestion that a new Oba succeeded in 1517 is correct.

(3) The spacing of Obas Ehengbuda to Ore-Oghene remains very uncertain and neither Talbot's nor Egharevba's dates for this period are completely convincing.

(4) For the period from the founding of the dynasty up to Ewuare there is no satisfactory basis for absolute dating and in the absence of any possibility of contemporary records this period will probably remain pre-historic. If Ozolua was reigning in 1485 and was the fifteenth Oba it appears likely that the dynasty began not later than about 1300. On the basis of our review of Egharevba's own evidence his date of about 1200 must be regarded as too early. But for this period nothing is certain.

It may seem a little unfair to examine Egharevba's work so rigorously. In its time and place his *'Short History'* has been of inestimable value and its charm and character will continue to give it an important place in Benin studies. All who are interested in Benin

1. Primogeniture appears to be a long-established feature of Edo social organisation. If Ewuakpe did in fact introduce it as a principle of succession to the kingship he was probably only adjusting that institution to the general pattern of Edo society, though 1700 seems a very late date for this adjustment to have been made. There is some support for this view, however, in Dapper (1668) who implies that for commoners the eldest son is the sole heir while the Oba chooses his heir from among his sons. On the other hand as late as the seventeen-eighties, according to Landolphe, this was still the case and, he says, the choice rarely fell on the eldest son. It must be borne in mind, however, that Landolphe may have read Dapper and that his statement should in any case be evaluated in terms of what has been said about legitimacy (see footnote above).

will remain in his debt. His accuracy for the last two centuries of Benin's independent history is a tribute to his industry and integrity. The character of his book is so compelling, indeed, that his chronological conclusions have been accepted too uncritically, especially for the period up to the first European contacts. His date of 1200 for the founding of the Benin dynasty has often been quoted as established fact. The date he gives for Oguola's accession, 1280, has been taken as marking the introduction of the bronze-casting technique to Benin. William Fagg, for example, writes "About 1280 Oba Oguola asked the Oni to send a master-founder to teach bronze-casting to Bini apprentices".¹ It is true that the traditions of the bronze-casters trace their origin from Ife in the reign of Oguola, though it is generally said that they came against the Oni's wishes, but from our analysis above the date is clearly not so well-established as Fagg's statement suggests. On the available evidence Oguola may well have reigned a hundred years later.

When the limitations of the hitherto accepted chronologies have been pointed out we are still left with a useful tentative time-scale for our historical studies. A deeper analysis of Benin traditions, the checking of these against the traditions of neighbouring peoples, and the possibility of further information from contemporary sources should help us to arrive at more precise conclusions, at least from the end of the fifteenth century onwards. The Benin people relate such events as wars and conquests, the founding of social and political institutions, the creation of titles and title-groups, the planning of Benin City, the progress of ritual and occupational specialisation, developments in bronze-casting, and the introduction of new cults to the reigns of specific Obas. By setting these events against our dynastic chronology it should be possible to obtain a fairly coherent picture of at least the broad phases of Benin history. More than this cannot be expected. Comparing the social institutions and culture patterns of Benin and neighbouring areas can help us to formulate more precise theories about the political and cultural currents that have influenced the internal history of the central area of Southern Nigeria.

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1 W. B. Fagg in Elisofon, *The Sculpture of Africa*, p. 64. I should say that in a discussion after the publication of his essay Mr Fagg and I found that we had by then come to similar conclusions about the incorrectness of Egharevba's dating. It was partly as a result of this valuable discussion that I made a further scrutiny of Egharevba's evidence and this led to the conclusions given above concerning the period up to 1485.

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THE NOK CULTURE IN PREHISTORY

by

B. E. B. FAGG

THERE CAN have been few archaeological discoveries made as a direct result of open-cast metal-mining which have given such a revealing and intimate picture of a completely unsuspected yet widespread culture as those made at Nok, which is situated very close indeed to the geographical centre of Nigeria.

The discovery was only fully appreciated in 1944 when an exceptionally fine head in terra cotta was found 25 feet deep during tin-mining in the hills close to Jemaa (Fig.1). This was found to bear a striking stylistic resemblance to a small monkey's head which had been dug up many years before at Nok itself. It is sobering to reflect how much valuable evidence must have passed unnoticed in the early days of tin mining and even today on the fringes of the minesfield and beyond. For discoveries made other than in mining deposits, for example at Katsina Ala, Ankiring and Kagara and also within the minesfield at Wamba, Tare, Jemaa and most recently at Abuja, have always been made by persons who knew of the existence of the Nok figurines, and consequently recognised the importance of what they had found.

The area in which the Nok Culture has so far been found, and this we believe may be only a fraction of its actual distribution, has already spread to an area of 300 miles by 100 miles lying across the Niger and Benue valleys, mostly north of the Confluence.

The only place where sufficient associated material has so far been found to present a valid picture of the way of life of the people who made the figurines is in the Nok valley, for at most of the other sites the finds have been sporadic owing largely to the nature of the deposits and the somewhat irregular mining of the concentrates of tin and columbite. It should be emphasised that even at Nok it would be incorrect to talk of a true archaeological association when the finds have all been made in alluvial deposits, but the occurrence of a similar assemblage at so many different sites and the physical condition of the finds compared with the heavily abraded stone implements derived from earlier alluvial deposits makes it a reasonable assumption that these objects are all the material products of the makers of the figurines. There is also much internal evidence in the figurines themselves which supports this view.

The Nok people appear likely to have been the ancestors of the present population of this part of Nigeria and appear to have enjoyed



Fig. 1. The Jemaa head, showing the deeply modelled and perforated eyes and everted lips characteristic of the Nok Style. [height: $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches]



Fig. 2. Fragmentary terra cotta figurine from Jemaa and bronze statuette collected at Benin and thought to be 18th century (or earlier) Yoruba work. The proportions are closely similar and correspond to those in the bronze figure of an Oni of Ife from Ita Yemoo found in 1947. [height: $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches] The features of the face on the bronze figure are closer to those of Nok than in most other Benin or Yoruba brasswork. [height of bronze figure: $13\frac{1}{4}$ inches]



Fig 3. *Nok terra cotta head with elongated ears from Gold Coffer Camp near Jemaa. [height: $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches].*
(cf. Figure 4 and 5 and also some modern Yoruba Egungun masks)



Fig. 4. Figurine in the Nok Style with exaggerated ears from Gold Coffer Camp, Jemaa. [height: 9 inches]





Fig. 6. Fragmentary arms with bangles, pendants, strings of beads and tassels from the figurine deposits at Nok which resemble similar ornaments depicted in Ife art. [maximum dimension: 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches]



Fig. 7. Face fragment showing half of the nose and lips of a head from Nok. The features are portrayed with a naturalism unusual for the human heads from Nok and approaching that of Ife work. [height: $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches]



Fig. 8. Face fragment in terra cotta from Ire, north of Oshogbo. This piece has affinities with both Ife and Nok art. [height: 3 inches]

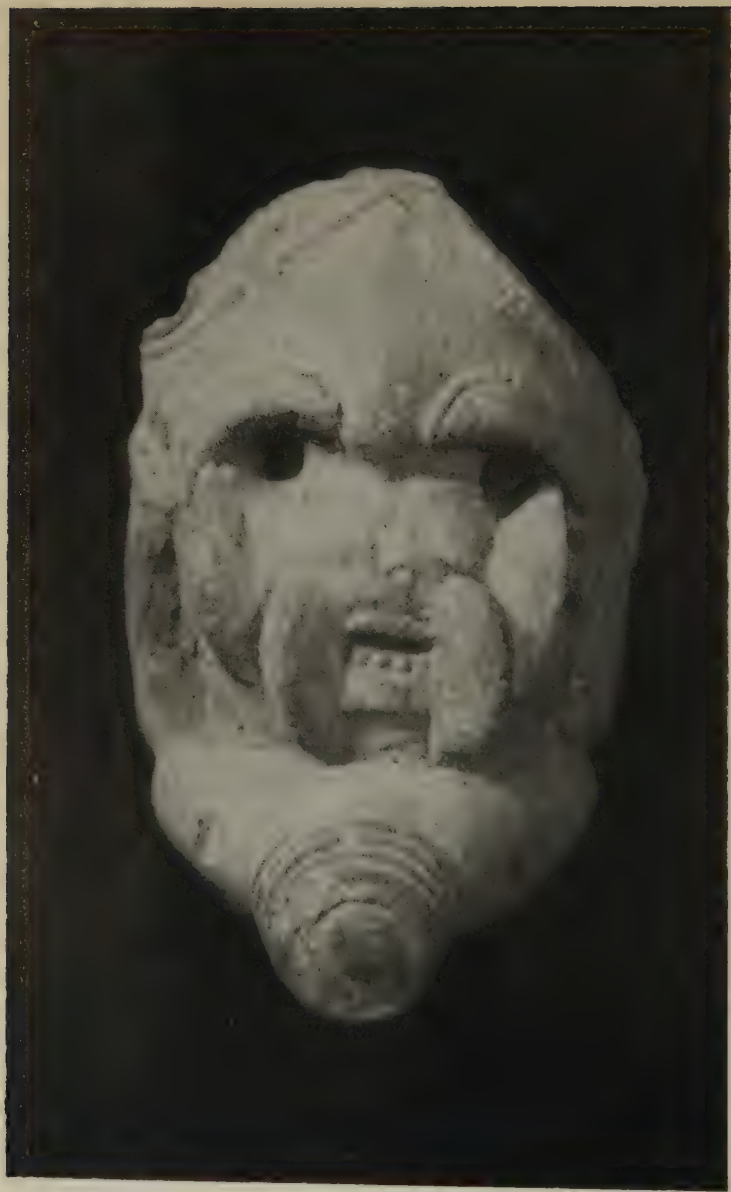


Fig. 9. The nose, mouth and chin with plaited and coiled beard of a terra cotta head from Nok with exaggerated development of the canines. Parallels exist in modern Ibo art. [height: 6½ inches]

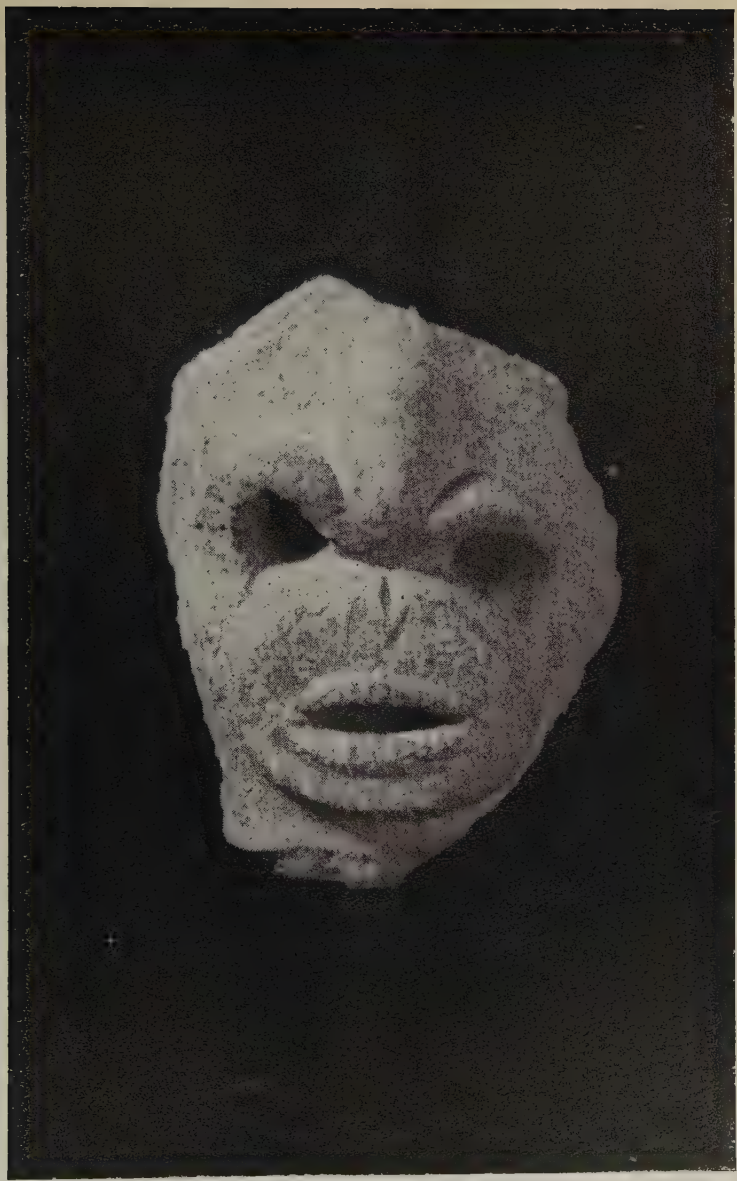


Fig. 10. Terra cotta fragment of nose and mouth from Nok showing blocking-out of features similar to some contemporary Ibo wood-carvings. [height: 6 inches]

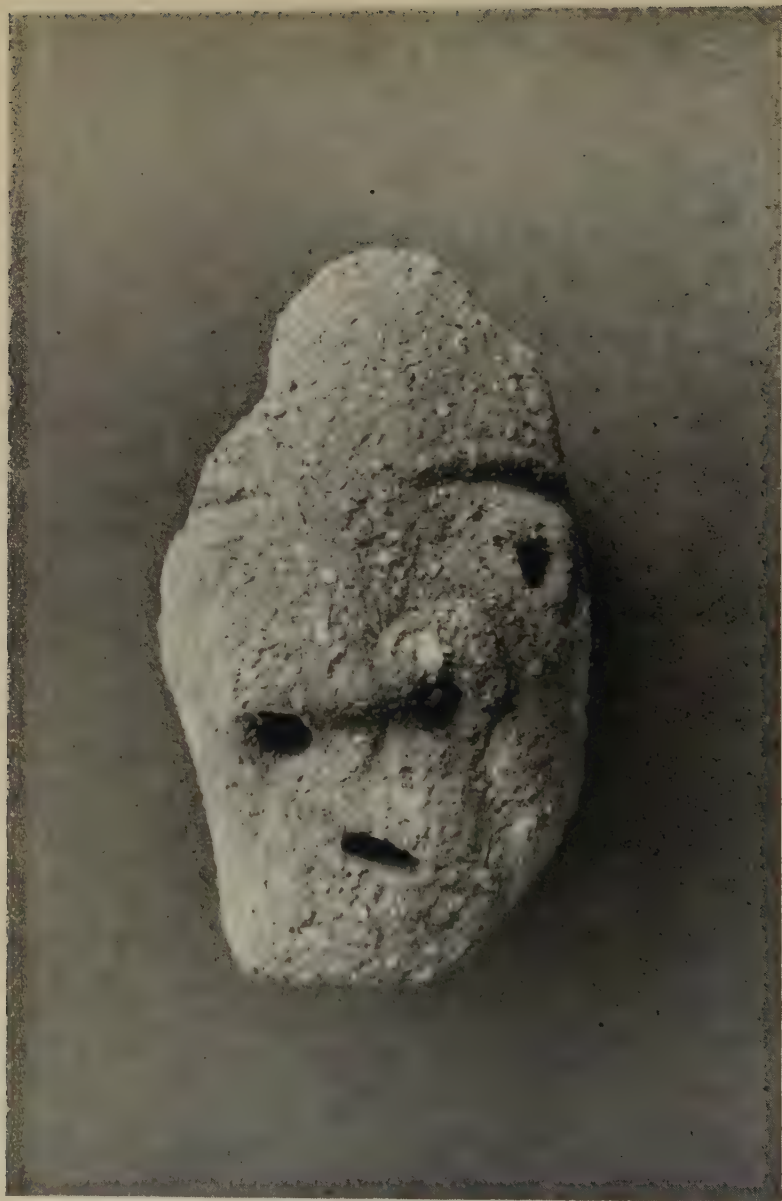


Fig. 11. Terra cotta head of a sufferer from a cysted cataract in the left eye, and facial paralysis distorting the nose and mouth (cf. *Ibibio* grotesque masks). [height: $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches]



Fig. 12 Terra cotta fragment of the richly decorated loins of a woman showing a bell suspended from strings of beads on the right hip. This resembles the small iron bells formerly worn by women of the Jal tribe at the South East corner of the Jos Plateau. [height: $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches]

an economy and way of life nearly, if not quite, as advanced as that of the present inhabitants. The material remains are of course almost, though not entirely, restricted to inorganic materials which necessarily give a one-sided picture, but the fact which emerges most clearly is that the Nok Culture flourished at about the beginning of the metal age. As elsewhere in the world, the introduction of the use of iron must have given its possessors irresistible superiority and enabled a splendid culture to flourish in its trail.

There is a suggestion of evidence from the linguistic studies of Professor J. H. Greenberg that a proto-language, whose structure can be inferred from a multiplicity of derivative languages, flourished in the central area of Nigeria about two thousand years ago. This it will be seen is in accord with conclusions reached about the extent of the Nok Culture, both before and after his hypothesis, on the basis of different kinds of physical evidence.

The nature of the deposits at Nok, which is clearly due to slight fluctuations in climate in an area of good seasonal rainfall, has prevented the preservation of any organic material other than semi-carbonised wood, seeds, leaves, etc., and there is no trace whatever of animal or human bones. There is abundant evidence that iron-smelting and smithing were being practised at the time when the critical deposits containing the figurines were laid down. Numerous *tuyères* and other furnace equipment have been found in the gravels at the bottom of the sequence of deposits. There is further abundant evidence in the lumps of charcoal-laden slag which is found not only with the *tuyères* but also in the overlying deposits, indicating the probability of an unbroken tradition of iron working in the Nok valley from the time of the Nok Culture to the present day. Lumps of cooked earth have been found which are evidently parts of the actual furnaces and also slabs of hard clay bearing the impressions of sticks which appear to be parts of some form of wattle-and-daub construction. The relative rarity of the latter probably indicates that this material is somewhat unstable and breaks down much more readily than pottery or charred earth.

These facts and the frequent finds of heavy stone querns differing in no important respect from those in use today, the discovery of semi-carbonised seeds (most common of which are those of the *atili* tree—the all-important oil-bearing tree of the present hill tribes, which was previously thought to be a recent importation from the rain-forest regions of the South) and perhaps most striking of all the extraordinary flat stone hoes which were probably used for swamp cultivation, clearly indicate an agricultural economy very little different from that practised by the Ham and their neighbours today. Oil-palm trees, which are scarce enough in the area at the present time, must have been common in the past, to judge by the frequency of the finds of indented stones and dimpled hammer stones and numerous palm kernels found in the gravels, usually cracked open.

It would of course be of considerable interest and perhaps of some importance to know what were the grain crops cultivated at that time. Evidence of this has not yet been identified, though it is hoped that eventually a study of fossil pollen from the thick clay beds will be found to give us the answer to this problem.

Among relics of cultural interest but of no economic importance are the stone and tin ornaments and hexagonal quartz crystals which were ground down to smooth, usually tapering rods, sometimes no more than $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch thick. Others are as much as $\frac{7}{16}$ of an inch in thickness and are very similar to the stone earlobe plugs made of agate to be seen to this day worn by Yoruba women, for example in Ilorin. Some appear to be lip plugs not unlike those still used by the Ham women and one very remarkable specimen just discovered was most probably worn horizontally in the septum of the nose in the fashion of grass stalks among the present-day Kaleri.

Objects of tin found at Nok and other sites where Nok figurines have been found are almost restricted to beads having a superficial resemblance to perforated cowry shells, (though no significance is imputed to this fact). These vary in size from about $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch to $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch in maximum dimension. They appear to have been made by impressing a small horned tool onto molten droplets of tin metal. A single stone mould has been found which is evidently for the manufacture of pear-shaped pendant beads but none of these beads has been found at Nok, though many have been found elsewhere on the Minesfield. The mould is closely similar to the ones found at Khami Ruins in Rhodesia which are thought to be mediaeval in age. There is a single tin bead in the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia which is similar to the commoner types which were made here as late as the nineteenth century. There is no evidence at present for the export of tin from Nigeria in early times, though the discovery of the Nigerian Tinfields was a direct result of the trade in tin ingots (known as tin 'straws') in the latter half of the nineteenth century. But the practice of making ingots is perhaps in itself evidence for a well-established trade in the metal, and mining methods, including underground mining, were evidently well-organised.

The majority of the relics of this culture have been found in alluvial deposits which vary in depth from about six feet to well over forty feet below the present land surface. On the basis of depth alone this would mean very little but for the fact that the sequence of deposits from the basal gravels to the humus at the top is usually the same and in areas separated by considerable distances. Lying on the bedrock and containing concentrated deposits of metal ore are the gravels which are more or less coarse and bouldery and contain the cultural material. Immediately above the gravel bed and sometimes separated from it by a peaty layer containing leaves and twigs, are barren sands which in turn are overlain by a thick layer of grey, or almost black, sticky carbonaceous clay. Above the clay bed, the

most significant horizon for the dating of the cultural material, are false-bedded sands and loamy soils almost devoid of cultural material, due it seems to the high concentration of iron salts which occurs in the zone of aeration. The occurrence of this sequence of deposits and especially of the clay bed, which varies from two to six feet thick, at almost all the sites in the Nok valley and at many sites in other parts of the Minesfield was taken as proof of a minor climatic cycle due to a small but significant change in overall rainfall precipitation or in its intensity. The age of these deposits was tentatively equated with the Nakuran Wet Phase, on the basis of long-range correlations with deposits in East and Central Africa, and on the fact that the dating of the East African deposits was partly based on evidence from the Sahara region. The claim that the Nok Culture flourished in the latter half of the Nakuran (i.e. during the last four centuries B.C.) was claimed as a reasonable interpretation of the facts before the development of radio-carbon dating, although some thought this to be an excessive antiquity to claim for the terracotta sculpture.

The presence of the solid clay bed in the deposits containing the figurines has fortunately acted as a barrier to the destructive effects of the percolating mineral-laden water, and contributed to the preservation of tree trunks, leaf mould, grass stalks and other remains of vegetation in a state of semi-carbonisation. Some of this material had already been collected when the technique of radio-active carbon was first applied to archaeological dating, and such is the abundance of this material that it was immediately possible to collect a new series of samples under conditions which would diminish the possibility of contamination to an absolute minimum. There was a delay of more than five years before the laboratories were finally able to overcome the danger of contamination in the laboratory from the long-range effects of fall-out from nuclear tests.

The radiocarbon results for Nok were puzzling because the log from the basal gravels where the figurines are found gave an age of approximately 3,500 B. C. which was within 50 years of the age of a carbonised log from the deposits at Zenebi, in Southern Kano Province, which were thought, and now proved, to be of Makalian age. It was clear that the log from Nok which had been analysed must have found its way into the gravels by sludging in from the earlier deposits which had been eroded at the time of the deposition of the Nakuran series of sediments. Samples collected from the clay horizon which contained abundant carbon material in the shape of leaves, twigs, the roots of aquatic grasses, etc., were found to be unsatisfactory as they could not yield sufficient pure carbon for a successful analysis.

Two years ago therefore, immediately after receiving these rather baffling figures, we excavated two large cuts, or "paddocks", in the area reserved for archaeological research at Nok and in the second were successful in finding substantial pieces of trunk wood *in situ* in the

heart of the grey clay, in the youngest deposits in fact which had so far produced figurines. An analysis of these specimens gave the satisfactory date of approximately A.D. 200. Specimens from the gravels below in which figurine material was found gave a date of approximately 900 B.C. a figure incidentally which was within 45 years of the determination of the material from the deposits in the Njoro Rock Shelter in Kenya which was formed at the beginning of the Nakuran Wet Phase. This may incidentally indicate that even long-range correlations of climatic phenomena are not without their validity.

It is now therefore an acceptable hypothesis that the Nok Culture flourished at least during the latter half of the first millennium B.C. and for some two centuries into the Christian era. How much later the style persisted it is not yet possible to say, but evidence is now building up indicating that the art style of the Nok Culture must have survived very much longer, and perhaps the finds at Katsina Ala and Kagara are much later in age, though the former are identical in style with figurines from the dated alluvial deposits at Nok.

The links of the Nok Culture with later cultures can only at present be surmised by a study of comparative iconography, a form of study which has already yielded valuable conclusions about the Ife-Benin tradition. Anyone who has even casually looked at the Nok figurines cannot help being struck by the very characteristic treatment of the eyes, both in the human and animal figures. This feature is in fact the most persistent detail of style which can be traced throughout the culture area. A very similar treatment of the eyes is characteristic of some modern Yoruba woodcarving—especially their *Gelede* masks—and it is significantly absent from any other recent West African art style.

The subject matter of the sculpture at Ife (Fig. 6) and Benin, the postures of the figures and their proportions are surprisingly similar to those of the Nok Figurine Culture, and it is interesting to note that the very feature of the latest finds at Ife which more or less conclusively proves the African, or more specifically Yoruba, origins of the art of Ife—the *proportions* of the splendid bronze figure of an Oni—can be paralleled both by a Nok figurine from Jemaa and an extremely rare type of bronze figure from Benin (Fig. 2). There are moreover pieces from Nok which strongly suggest the same tradition as the seventeenth-century commemorative plaques of Benin, and there is a unique terra-cotta Janus head from Nok which was probably worn on top of the head as a mask, and which has the characteristic prominent teeth of the brass masks of the Benin Oduduwa cult, and has a hole in the crown in the position where the vertical tube emerges from these Benin bronze headdress masks. There is moreover in existence in Benin a single bronze Janus mask.

Serpent worship, the mother-and-child concept, the idea of dualism, of balancing and interacting forces, implicit in the Janus

symbol and the beginnings of naturalism in sculpture (especially in animal forms), are all present in the work so far discovered in the Nok Culture area. Detailed comparisons can be made with recent Baluba carvings (tiered hair style) of the Congo with Dan masks (everted lips of Jemaa and Nok (cf. Fig.1)) of the Ivory coast, with Ibibio masks (grotesque or diseased physiognomy) (Fig.11) and Bende Ibo masks (Fig. 9) with Ibo carvings (blocked-out features of the face (Fig.10)), with the Jal of the High Plateau (iron bells and chains worn by women (Fig. 12)) and, nearest home of all, with the ceremonial hairdress with 'buns' and feathers of the Numana and Kachicheri tribes of the plains of Jemaa. Near Jemaa three terra-cottas were also found with markedly elongated ears (Figs.3&4) which is one of the few traits which can be closely paralleled in the naturalistic Ife art in a single head from the shrine of Olokun Walode which has enormous ears four or five times bigger than normal, though it is in all other respects naturalistic (Fig. 5). Recent finds at Ire (Fig. 8), north of Oshogbo and at Abuja help to bridge the spatial gap between the Nok Culture area and Ife (Fig. 7).

There is now every reason to hope that further finds both in the area of the Nok Culture and in more or less dateable deposits in Yorubaland, Benin and elsewhere on the West Coast will confirm the basic homogeneity of so much of West African sculpture and its derivation from a traditional complex going back at least two thousand years, and at the same time will dispose of the widely held hypothesis that the Ife-Benin complex owes its style and inspiration to origins outside West Africa.

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AN EARLY PORTUGUESE TRADING VOYAGE TO THE FORCADOS RIVER

by

A. F. C. RYDER

Early Portuguese trade with the Forcados River

IT IS uncertain in what year the Portuguese first sailed into this river which they named the Rio dos Forcados from the swallow-tailed birds they saw there. Certainly they knew of its existence earlier than 1485, for in December of that year Joao II of Portugal issued a privilege to the first settlers embarking for São Tomé which permitted them to trade the produce of the island "in the five slave rivers which are beyond our fortress of São Jorge da Mina".¹ These five rivers can be identified, thanks to the information given by Duarte Pacheco Pereira that the River Mahin was known to the Portuguese at the beginning of the sixteenth century as the Rio Primeiro (First River).² It is reasonably certain, therefore, that the "five slave rivers" were the Mahin, the Benin, the Escravos, the Forcados and the Ramos, all of which were known to and named by the Portuguese. That they were not specified individually in this privilege may, of course, indicate that they were known in Portugal only from a general reconnaissance of the coast. On the other hand, they were sufficiently familiar to be noted as slave markets, and as a source of pepper which the same privilege reserved to the Crown as a royal monopoly.

In the following year 1486 the King of Portugal leased the trade of these "slave rivers" to Bartolomeo Marchione, a Florentine merchant resident in Lisbon, for 1,100,000 *reis* a year, and later he extended the lease at least until 1495.³ In 1502 a converted Portuguese Jew, Fernão de Loronha, is recorded as holding the lease.⁴

1. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon. (afterwards referred to as A.T.T.) *Livro das Ilhas*, 109v-111v. 16 Dec. 1485. Trade is forbidden in gold, precious stones, spices and civet-cats: all pepper had to be sold to a royal factor.
2. Duarte Pacheco Pereira. *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*, ed. R. Mauny. Bissau, 1956. p. 130.
3. Blake, J. W. *Europeans in West Africa, 1450-1560*, London, 1942. vol. I. p. 106-7.
4. *ibid.* p. 98.

Such arrangements did not affect the privilege granted to the inhabitants of São Tomé which had been extended to those on the neighbouring island of Príncipe in 1500. Thus, for some twenty years, the Forcados was the scene of trade with ships sailing direct from Portugal and smaller vessels sent from the islands.

Probably in 1503 the Portuguese Crown decided to take the trade of this area into its own hands,¹ for the slaves and "coris" found there were needed at São Jorge da Mina where they could be bartered very profitably for gold. Royal ships now sailed directly from São Jorge to the Forcados, setting their course ENE across the Bight of Benin to make a landfall at the Benin River and then coasting to the Forcados. The reason for this indirect approach was the difficulty of recognising the Forcados River from the sea, the principal identification mark being only two particularly tall trees on the southern point, with the result that several ships attempting to make a direct landfall had mistaken the Ramos River for the Forcados and been wrecked on the shallow bar.² That Portuguese pilots had carefully surveyed the Forcados River by the beginning of the sixteenth century is demonstrated by the very close agreement between Pereira's account of the shoals and channel at the mouth of the river and the charts compiled by the latest survey of the river.

By 1510 at the latest, the trade was once again reorganised. In the interests of the Indian trade, King Manuel of Portugal had in 1506 forbidden the trade in Guinea pepper, which meant that these rivers became far less profitable to him. In addition the mortality rate among Portuguese officials and ships' crews engaged in the trade was alarmingly high, so much so that special bonuses had to be paid in order to induce crews to sail there. The Portuguese government therefore decided to hand the trade over to contractors operating from the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe who undertook to supply the slaves needed at São Jorge da Mina. In this way São Tomé became an entrepôt with ships bringing slaves, "coris", ivory and other merchandise from the rivers: some was then carried to São Jorge and the larger caravels called at the island to load the remainder for Lisbon. A considerable number of the slaves were kept on the island to work on the plantations.

Because those employed in the trade were now drawn from the acclimatised inhabitants of the islands, the mortality rate was much reduced. On the other hand the King of Portugal was gradually and rightly persuaded that the contractors were pocketing enormous profits. To get the best of both worlds he therefore decided in 1519 that trade with the rivers should once again be administered by royal

1. Possibly the trade had been controlled directly by the Crown for a few years within the period 1495-1502.

2. The bar of the Ramos River had less than two fathoms of water, compared with four fathoms in the Forcados channel at high tide.

officials, but they were now to establish the "factory" in São Tomé and continue to employ local seamen.¹ With minor variations this organisation persisted throughout the century.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the place of trade was not in the Forcados River itself, but at an unnamed place some eighteen miles up the Chanomi creek.² Making ample allowance for windings of the creek, this place must have been on or near the Escravos River which the Portuguese did not enter from the sea because of the very dangerous bar. There, in the time of Pereira, they bartered brass and copper manillas for slaves, cotton cloth and some leopard skins, palm oil and "coris".

About the people who lived in this area at the beginning of the century there is very little information. According to Pereira those who lived in the area where the Portuguese traded (that is to say between the Forcados and Escravos Rivers) were called *Huela*, a name that cannot be identified with any certainty, but probably related to the Urhobo or Isoko. Beyond them and further in the interior were the "Subou" (Sobo)—a name which if erroneous is clearly also of some antiquity. Pereira describes the "Subou" country as thickly populated and producing a large quantity of Benin pepper. The southern banks of the Forcados were inhabited by Ijaws (Jos), whose territory at that time stretched from this point as far as the Bonny River. They were considered a warlike people given to cannibalism, but the Portuguese drove some trade with them in the Forcados River in slaves and ivory.

As regards the political organisation of the Forcados area, there are good reasons for thinking that the area in which the Portuguese traded was under the control of Benin. For example, a ship trading in the Forcados in 1515 sent some of the local inhabitants to Benin in order to buy the slaves needed to complete the cargo.³ In the following year the Oba of Benin told the pilot of a São Tomé ship that if he could not bring his ship into the Benin River (then leased to the royal secretary Antonio Carneiro) arrangements would be made to send the cargo required from Benin to the Forcados.⁴ From other documents of this period, including the ship's book printed below, it is also clear that Portuguese vessels regularly sailed from the Benin to the Forcados River by way of the creeks. Finally, it may be significant that the largest of the presents given to local chiefs in the Forcados in 1522 was twenty cloths, exactly the same as that given in the same year to the Benin chiefs in charge of European trade.⁵

1. A. T. T. *Leis e Regimentos de D. Manuel*, 83r-88v. 8 Feb. 1519.

2. Pereira. *op. cit.* p. 138.

3. A. T. T. *Corpo Cronologico*, I. 20. 19. 18 April 1516.

4. A. T. T. *Corpo Cronologico*, I. 20. 127.

5. A. T. T. *Corpo Cronologico*, II. 149.29.

The ship's book printed below consists of thirty-six unbound pages written in a bold, legible hand and in a good state of preservation. It is now included in the collection known as the *Corpo Cronologico* in the Arquivo Nacional da Torre de Tombo, Lisbon under the reference number II. 102. 20. In that same collection are a few similar documents, among them the ship's book of the Sam Mygell relating to the Benin voyage mentioned in the present document, but, although Portuguese trade with the rivers was after 1519 under the control of a royal factor in São Tomé, it is unlikely that ships' books were regularly sent to Lisbon for preservation in the Casa de Guiné. Rather it may be assumed that a few found their way to Portugal when they were needed for the auditing of officials' accounts or for judicial investigations.

Judging by the size of her crew—a pilot, a clerk, a boatswain, five seamen and nine ship-boys—the Samta Maria da Comçeçam must have been a small vessel, possibly a small caravel of some 30 tons with a carrying capacity of 20 tons built in São Tomé especially for the trade with the rivers.¹ The cargo carried would be appropriate to such a size, for on the return voyage the ship carried, in addition to the crew (now depleted by two), 137 slaves, some 3 quintals of ivory and a quantity of provisions. Like all other craft which stayed long in these waters it rapidly became unseaworthy through the ravages of climate and marine animals on the timbers and the shortage of pitch with which to make thorough repairs.² Also, in common with most of her fellows, the Samta Maria was not withdrawn from service until disaster compelled it.

Since 1515 it had been the practice for a pilot to command all royal ships engaged in the West Africa trade, captains being judged superfluous, for it was on the pilot's skill in navigation and his knowledge of landmarks that the safety of a ship depended. Navigation in the Bight of Benin was particularly hazardous through the difficulty of recognising and entering rivers and from line squalls

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1. Valentim Fernandes. Bibliotheca Nacional de Lisboa. Mss. illum. 154. fol. 197r. Fernandes, writing in 1506, states that vessels of this tonnage were then being built in São Tomé for trade with the rivers.
 2. Pero de Caminha wrote to the King of Portugal in 1499 that ships trading to the rivers could not be expected to last more than five years. A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico*, I. 2. 130. 30 July 1499. cf. P. R. O. State Papers 12. 153. *Instructions for a voyage to the Benin River and trade there written by Randall Shawe, for a voyage to be undertaken by Bingham, a relative of E. Cotton*, 13 May 1582. "...this you must do which is the principal matter, that as your shipp is there, you must have long pekes that will reatche to the kele of your shipp, and that you must make shift to have her cleane three tymes a week under water, or ells the worms will destroy her; this must nedes be done..."

such as the Santa Maria met off Cape Fermoso, yet it is clear from the detailed sailing directions given by Pereira that a thorough and exact knowledge of the coast was soon built up by the Portuguese pilots. Their discovery of the passage from the Benin to the Forcados River must have taken place in the first decade of the sixteenth century, no doubt under the guidance of native pilots. Besides navigating the ship, the pilot was responsible for the conduct of trade, provisioning the ship and any negotiation with local rulers. On the clerk fell the duties of keeping an account of the trade, checking expenditure and recording all important or unusual occurrences affecting the ship, the crew or the cargo. Of the pilot and clerk of the Santa Maria da Comçeçam we have, unfortunately, no other memorial than this one voyage.

The seamen who manned ships trading to the rivers were almost all free inhabitants of São Tomé. Like the seamen of the Santa Maria da Comçeçam, most of them bore Portuguese names, but were mulattos closely related by blood to the slaves they carried away from the coast.¹ Their relative immunity to tropical disease developed mainly from that intermingling of races. Ship-boys, on the other hand, were usually slaves belonging to the wealthier inhabitants of São Tomé, so that their earnings, in the form of other slaves, went to their masters. Crews were paid with slaves because the free inhabitants of the islands depended on them to cultivate their farms, while any not required for agricultural or domestic labour could be sent to Portugal and sold.²

From this book it is clear that ships bound from São Tomé for the Forcados River were making their landfall at the Benin River just as they had done when sailing from São Jorge da Mina. Even when the ship began to leak badly off Cape Fermoso on the return voyage the pilot made for the Benin River rather than the nearer to hand Forcados, unless we are to assume that he was carried past the latter by the force of the wind. Apart from this enforced return to the Benin River, the time taken by the pilot of the Santa Maria to complete his cargo was an average one, that is approximately three months. The round voyage from São Tomé to the rivers usually took some four months, thus allowing a ship to make at least two complete voyages in a year.

1. A.T.T. *Chancellaria de Dom Manuel* liv. II. fol. 75v. 29 Jan. 1515. King Joao II had ordered that each person banished to São Tomé and any other settler should be given one female slave from those brought from the rivers, "his chief concern being that the said Island should be populated". Valentim Fernandes. *op.cit.* In 1485 King Joao II sent to São Tomé with the first Captain of the island "2000 children aged eight years and under which he took away from the Castilian Jews and had baptised. Many of them died, but at present (i.e. 1506) a good 600 both men and women are still alive. The Captain had them married but few of the women bore children of the whitemen; very many more bore children of the negros, while the negresses bore children of the whitemen".
2. A.T.T. *Livro das Ilhas*, fol. 61v.-62r. 20 March 1500.

Since the clerk of the *Samta Maria da Comçeican* has given no indication as to where his ship traded in the Forcados River, it is impossible to be certain that it was the place mentioned by Pereira. Wherever it was, it is interesting to note that conditions of trade there differed considerably from those of the Benin River, for in the Forcados River slaves could only be bought for cowries, not manillas, whereas yams, oil and other provisions could be had for manillas. In the Benin River it was possible to buy slaves with manillas, and it must be assumed that the slaves which Jorge Mendez bought for manillas came from that river.

Documents such as this ship's book are concerned solely with matters of trade and refer only incidentally to the domestic affairs and customs of the people with whom the Portuguese came into contact: they are never descriptive or explanatory. It must be remembered, however, that it was for trade that the Portuguese frequented the Guinea coast, and that this contact with Europeans through trade exercised a profound effect on the economic and political life of the coastal peoples. A detailed knowledge of this commerce is, therefore, essential to a true understanding of the development of West African states. More than this, while indigenous written records are wholly lacking for periods earlier than the nineteenth century, the bulk of documentation from European sources falls into the same apparently dull category of "accounts" to which this ship's book belongs. The few descriptive works written in the sixteenth century are all well-known, so the "accounts" are the only fund of written material from which we can hope to increase our knowledge of Nigeria at this period. They are more informative than they might appear on first acquaintance. They have the merit of precision in the matters with which they deal: we know, for example, exactly how many slaves were taken in one ship, how much was paid for them, what manufactured goods the Portuguese were introducing, in what quantities, the nature and relative value of local currencies, etc. They tell a good deal about the organisation of trade on the African as well as the European side. Also they are precise in a number of connected matters, such as the names of the chiefs with whom the Europeans had to deal. From several such documents it becomes possible to construct a general picture of trade at a given time and to trace certain significant developments, such as the growth or decline of the slave trade, the shift of trade from one area to another, changes in the demand for imported goods and numerous other details important to an understanding of the economic history of Southern Nigeria. A clearer knowledge of the economic history of this area will certainly contribute very greatly to a better understanding of its social and political history. In addition the incidental reference in a document to a local name or word may provide an essential clue to the identification of a political or cultural system. In this document, for example, there are a number of

names which cannot at present be identified, but the one which can, *Lisa*, establishes some link between the Forcados River and Ondo. It is only by elaborating our knowledge of the one aspect of Nigerian life in the sixteenth century of which we have detailed and accurate information, namely trade between the coastal states and Europeans, and by following leads from this material with the aid of anthropological techniques, that we can hope to clarify the early history of Nigeria.

The following translation follows the original Portuguese as closely as possible, and is printed in the form of the ship's book.

+¹

ANNO DOMINI 1522

Book of the ship Santa Maria da Comçeçam, which God save and guard and give good voyage, that goes now to gather a cargo in the Rio dos Forcados, and of which Jorgue Mendez is pilot and Francisco Fernandez clerk.

the xbiij tusks weighed iij quintals²
j tusk xj pounds

+

i³ we sailed from the Island of São Tomé on the twelfth day of the month of March

+

i we reached the Rio dos Forcados on the first day of the month of April

i we sailed from the Rio dos Forcados on the xxij day of the month of June.

+

On the xbiij day of the month of March having sailed as far as the Rio Feroso⁴, we were following the coast towards the Rio dos Forcados when the pilot called the seamen to the poop and told them it was evident that we could not go forward and that each man should give his opinion, whether he thought it wise to enter by the Rio Feroso, or whether he suggested something else, for it was evident

1. It was a common notarial practice to make the sign of the Cross at the head of each page. The clerk of the Santa Maria da Comçeçam has also used it to precede each sub-division of the ship's book.
2. The *quintal* was a Portuguese measure of weight equivalent to four *arrobas*: an *arroba* was equivalent to 32 pounds.
3. i = item
4. Rio Feroso, literally "The Beautiful River", was the name given by the Portuguese to what has become, prosaically, the Benin River.

that we could make no headway having lain there two days¹: we were well-placed for entering the Rio Fermoso and would sail in if they approved. Belchor Lopez and the others replied that the Rio dos Forcados was near and that we could reach it in another day. The pilot said it was well and shortly afterwards ordered the ship to put into land and entered the Rio Fermoso. We reached Oeyre² a port of Benin on the xxj day of the month of March. On the xxij day while we were in the same port the seaman Maya³ fled to Benin. We sailed from there to the Rio dos Forcados by the creeks and arrived on the first of April.

+

This is the Roll wherewith you Jorgue Mendez pilot of the ship Comçeçam are to trade in the Rio dos Forcados with your clerk.

i you carry fifteen quintals and sixty-six pounds of Indian cowries⁴
 _____xb qtl Lxbj lbs.

1. The prevailing S.W. wind must have been exceptionally strong for that season to have made all progress impossible for the caravel type of ship was especially designed to beat to the windward.
2. *Oeyre*. The name of this port occurs several times in documents of this period with variant spellings that make it clear that the Portuguese were using the local name e.g. *o Hery* (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* I.20.127. 19 Nov. 1516), *Oyere*, *Oere* (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II.149.29. 1522). Evidently this port lay somewhere in the Benin River and could be reached in one day from Ughoton, the trading port of Benin City. Possibly it was near the entrance to the Nana Creek which the Portuguese used to reach the Forcados from the Benin River. There are some grounds for thinking that the "Warri" of the seventeenth century is derived from this name.
3. Probably a freed slave of Benin origin. In 1511 a Portuguese pilot of São Tomé was accused of maltreating a freed slave named Diogo da Maya then serving as a ship-boy. (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* III. 4. 98).
4. The Portuguese brought these shells from the Malabar coast, but had not begun to do so when Pereira wrote the *Esmeraldo* c.1506. In a contract signed 26 March 1515 between Fernao Jorge and the King of Portugal concerning a lease of the São Tomé trade there occurs the following clause: On condition that His Majesty shall give him licence to have brought from India each year five hundred quintals of cowries for as long as this contract shall last: they shall come as ballast in His Majesty's ships without paying any duties or freightage: the cowries that do not come in one year he shall be able to have brought in the following year. He shall not expend the cowries in any part other than the places specified in this contract, and if, when it expires, any of the said cowries remain, he shall be obliged to sell them to His Majesty's officials or to the contractors who succeed him in the said traffic to spend in that trade for the price at which they are currently valued in this city (i.e. Lisbon). (Arquivo Historico Ultramarino, Lisbon: *São Tomé caixa* 2).

It is possible that this contract was the beginning of the sea-borne importation of cowries into the coastal area of the Bights. In June 1519 the Treasurer of the Casa da Mina acknowledged receipt of 27 quintals of cowries for the São Tomé trade. (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II. 156.26). In July 1520 he acknowledged another 20 quintals. (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II. 90. 65).

i you carry of copper manillas ¹ _____	iiij x m. ^{as 2}
i you carry of glass beads ³ _____	iiij thousands
i you carry of linen ⁴ _____	ij ^c xj yds. half ⁵
i you carry of red caps ⁶ _____	xij pieces.

+

you will purchase for Our Lady of this Island⁷ the slave due from
every ship _____ j slave

1. Pereira remarked that the Binis preferred copper to brass manillas. (*op.cit.* p. 134). The Portuguese purchased them through their factory in Antwerp. (ref. A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II.124.198. April 1525).
2. iiij x m.^{as} = 4,010 manillas.
3. *glass beads*. The Portuguese text describes them as "cristalynas". ref. A.T.T. *Núcleo Antigo* m. 166 "Receita e despesa do tesoureiro da Guiné, 1504-5".
On the xxbij day of November gave to Lionardo Nardo for the purchase which I made of him of two hundred and nineteen and a half thousands of long, coloured Venetian glass beads, one hundred and five thousand three hundred and sixty reis at the rate of iiij.lxxx reis per thousand.
On the said day (i.e. 9 Nov. 1504) bought of the said Joam de Samta fee (a Castilian merchant) nineteen packets of cylindrical glass beads, a thousand in each packet, for ten thousand four hundred and fifty reis.
And biij CL reis for sixty-seven and half pounds of glass beads from Flanders, which are half of the quintal and seven pounds that he delivered, at the rate of one hundred and twenty reis a pound as they were valued.
Apparently none of these glass beads were traded during this voyage.
4. *linen*. ref. A.T.T. *Núcleo Antigo* m.166.
On the xx Nov. 1504 bought of Joam de Samta fee a Castilian resident in this city (i.e. Lisbon) and his partner five hundred yards of Breton linen and gave him for them twenty thousand reis at the rate of forty reis a yard.
On the same day bought from Joam de Lemanche and Guillaume frenchmen, four thousand five hundred and fifty-five yards of Rouen linen and gave for them two hundred and seventy-three thousand three hundred and thirty reis at the rate of sixty reis a yard.
5. ij^e xj yds half = 211½ yards.
6. *red caps*. Probably red was by this time a colour reserved for the apparel of dignitaries, so that only a limited quantity of such headgear could be sold. ref. A.T.T. *Núcleo Antigo* m.166.
On the same day (i.e. 9 Jan. 1505) bought of Pero de Crasto and Gonçalo de Govantes Castilian merchants twenty dozen untrimmed caps dyed in red grain and gave for them fourteen thousand four hundred reis at the rate of 720 reis a dozen.
7. *Our Lady of this Island*. Alvaro de Caminha, Captain of São Tomé 1493-1499, had built the church of Santa Maria on the island which for ecclesiastical purposes was known at this time as the parish of *Nossa Senhora da Graça*. Manuel I ordered that the vicar was to have six slaves a year from those brought from the coast for his own subsistence and the maintenance of the church. (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* I. 19.131. 29th Feb. 1516). Since there is no trace of any other provision, the reference here would imply that normally six slaving voyages were made from São Tomé each year.

i you will purchase for the hospital of this Island¹ another slave due
from every ship —————j slave

+

i you will purchase for yourself two slaves from your salary and
subsistence² —————ij slaves

i you will purchase for each seaman and for each ship-boy and also
for the clerk one slave from their subsistence and they all have to
pay the fourth and twentieth.³

i And while you are trading in the said River you will observe the
following procedure in the expenditure of the cowries: when you
stave any barrel you will turn out the cowries into a chest which
you will keep locked with two keys, one to be held by you the pilot
and the other by the clerk: and it is not to be opened except by the
two of you together. The said cowries are to be counted before
the said clerk when it is necessary to pay them out, and as soon as
this is finished they are to be locked up again in such a manner that
all is done before the clerk who will record how they are expended.

This is to be done because otherwise it is impossible to know how
many cowries are expended and how many wasted.⁴

-
1. *the hospital of this Island.* The hospital of São Tomé was founded by royal decree in 1504 when six slaves were assigned to it each year for its upkeep. (A.T.T. *Místicos*. liv.2. fol. 280v. 3 May 1504). Most of the slaves of the hospital and of the church were, of course, sold either in the island or in Portugal.
 2. São Tomé crews were regularly paid in slaves, not in cash. The royal ordinance of 1519 regulating the trade with the mainland states that the São Tomé contractors had been paying on the following basis: a pilot, six slaves a year; a boatswain, four slaves; a seaman, three slaves; and a ship-boy, two slaves. Royal officials were instructed to bargain with the crews for the same or better terms, but evidently they did not manage to win any reduction. (A.T.T. *Leis e Regimentos de Dom Manuel* 83r-88v. 8 Feb. 1519). All inhabitants of the island were permitted to send their slaves to Portugal for sale, but not to São Jorge da Mina where they might be bartered for gold.
 3. *the fourth and the twentieth.* These were two royal taxes imposed *ad valorem* on all imports. They were collected in São Tomé by local officials or else farmed. ref. A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II 79. 66. 1519. "recebedor dos quartos de beny".
 4. This precaution was necessary because cowries were bought and loaded by weight, but paid out by number, thus presenting the pilot and clerk with obvious opportunity to defraud the Crown. The system recommended here cannot have proved wholly satisfactory for in 1526 the cowries in the cargo of a ship trading to Benin were reckoned by number—altogether 512,520. (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II. 151. 76). The number carried by the Santa Maria da Comçeiçã must have been rather larger than this,

You carry a large quantity of yams¹ and if at the time of your arrival the ship Sam Mygell is still there you will hand over however many are needed for her voyage to this island.² Also you will let us know by the same ship how many yams you will need, so that we may supply you with them. If you should have gathered a reasonable cargo and can find no provisions in that country, rather than eke out and exhaust what you have, you should leave and come to this Island. And if it should happen that you have need of provisions and a poor cargo, then you should go to complete it in the Rio Real³ where you will find provisions.

- i You will purchase a large quantity of osiers⁴ because the factory is in need of them. You are to be sure to bring them under penalty of paying two thousand reis to the hospital of this Island.

- i Also as much oil⁵ as you are able and fifty loin-cloths⁶ for the negroes who work in the factory and in the plantations.⁷ And

1. *yams*. The yam was probably indigenous to São Tomé. Certainly it was being cultivated there in 1499 by Portuguese colonists. In 1506 Portuguese banished to the island are described as cultivating them on large farms using slave labour: many became rich in that way. (Valentim Fernandes, *Descripçam*, 197r). New varieties were imported from the mainland, and a Portuguese pilot observed about 1540 that Benin yams were preferred because of their more delicate flavour: large quantities were supplied to the slave ships.
2. The Sam Mygell must have left the Forcados River some time before the Santa Maria da Comçeição arrived there on 1 April 1522, because on 16 April 1522 the former ship sailed from São Tomé again to trade in the Benin River. (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II, 149,29). It must be remembered that often nothing was heard of a ship for six months or more: the round voyage seldom took less than four months.
3. Apparently it was difficult to buy sufficient yams in the Forcados River. Pereira makes no mention of yam in this river, but states that ample supplies of good yam were available in the Rio Real (i.e. the Bonny River) thanks to the large quantities brought by canoe from far in the interior. (*op cit.* p.146). When Pereira wrote the slave trade in the Bonny River was already of importance to the Portuguese.
4. *osiers*. Portuguese, "vymes". Possibly they were reeds used for weaving baskets and mats.
5. *oil*. The palm-oil trade of the Forcados River is commented upon by Pereira, *op.cit.* p. 138.
6. *loin-cloths*. Cotton cloth from the Forcados and Benin Rivers was widely used for the clothing of slaves and freemen in São Tomé. "Those that have them wear clothes of Portuguese style, but the rest wear cotton gowns and trousers." Fernandes, *op. cit.*
7. *plantations*. Besides yam and millet plantations large areas were brought under cultivation for the production of sugar-cane. In 1506 Fernandes reported that there were in São Tomé large sugar-cane plantations already producing molasses and that the Captain soon hoped to make sugar. By that time 2,000 slaves were employed in the island as agricultural labourers. By 1540, 60 sugar-mills were in production.

you will be advised to purchase all the ivory that may be produced to you even though it be small, and also coris¹ and some clay for the buildings of this factory.

Also you will give to each ship-boy of our Lord King ten manillas for his subsistence²

done in the Island of Sam Tome on the x day of the month of March bc./xxij.

+

Roll of those who died

i on the xxij day of the month of March in the port of Oeyre Maya ran away to Benin.

i on the xbij day of the month of April in the Rio dos Forcados died Bras ship-boy of Lopo Ferreira.³

Gifts⁴ which were given to Diffre,⁵ to the Captain⁶ and Tacor, to Sonoo⁷ and to Joham Infante.

1. *coris*. Pereira describes them as "blue beads with red veins which they call *coris*". (*op. cit.* p.138). The Portuguese also bought them in the Benin River and in the River Ajaya, which was probably in the region of what later became Grand Popo. (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II. 170.47). It may be conjectured that they all had a common origin in the interior possibly near the Niger. George, *Historical Notes on the Yoruba Country*. Lagos, 1895, furnishes the following information which may be relevant: "The present town of Ife should not be taken as the original Ife Ife... The old Ife Ife was much further in the interior." (p.64). "The ground of Ife was then in its primitive richness and nature furnished valuable beads such as *segi* and *einla*" (p.30). *segi* were blue tubular beads and *einla* yellow tubular beads. The pilot of the Sam Mygell was told that he might buy yellow beads as well as *coris* in Benin. During the time that a Portuguese factor was resident in Benin he bought 33,382 *coris* and 900 yellow beads in the space of 20 months. (A.T.T. *Livro das Ilhas* fol. 129). For both kinds the Portuguese found a ready market on the Costa da Mina where they exchanged them for gold. Probably they were a form of agate.
2. These would be used by the ship-boys to purchase foodstuff whilst in the river. Presumably the ship-boys owned by private masters received their subsistence directly from those masters.
3. Lopo Ferreira was one of the two clerks attached to the royal factory in São Tomé. (A.T.T. *Livro dos Registos de Leys e Regimentos de Dom Manuel* fol. 90v. 14 Feb. 1519).
4. Gifts or "dashes" were given to the chiefs responsible for trade with the Portuguese according to a fixed scale.
5. *Diffre*. cf. *Ryfe*, the name given by the Portuguese for the chief of Ughoton in 1522. He also received a present of 20 pieces of cloth from the pilot of the Sam Mygell. (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II. 149.29).
6. *The Captain* is referred to later in the document as the "Captain of the Rio dos Forcados", but, if the size of the presents is any guide, he was of less consequence than Diffre and Tacor.
7. *Tacor and Sonoo*. While these names are at present unidentifiable, it is probable that they, and Diffre, are titles rather than personal names, for the Portuguese were in the habit of referring to Africans either by their titles or

ī the pilot gave Diffre twenty linen cloths ¹ as a present	xx cloths
ī the pilot gave the Captain fifteen linen cloths as a present	xb cloths
ī the pilot gave Tacor seventeen linen cloths as a present	xbij cloths
ī the pilot gave Sonoo fourteen linen cloths as a present	xiiij cloths
ī the pilot gave Joham Imfante eleven linen cloths as a present	xj cloths

77

+

Purchase of ivory for manillas

ī the pilot bought two tusks ² of ivory for fifty manillas	L m. ^{as}
ī the pilot bought two tusks of ivory for xxb manillas	xxb m. ^{as}
ī the pilot bought two tusks of ivory for forty-five manillas	Rb m. ^{as}
ī the pilot bought two tusks of ivory for seven manillas	bij m. ^{as}
ī the pilot bought one tusk of ivory for three manillas	iiij m. ^{as}
ī the pilot bought two tusks of ivory for fifty manillas	L m. ^{as}
ī the pilot bought two tusks of ivory for forty manillas	R m. ^{as}
ī the pilot bought two tusks of ivory for fifteen manillas	xb m. ^{as}

by some Portuguese name, as here they refer to one as Joham Imfante. There is good reason to regard Portuguese transcriptions of West African titles as accurate, for where they can be checked against existing titles the correspondence is close. For example, Pereira (*op.cit.* p.131) gives the title of the ruler of Ijebu as *Agusale*: the difference between this and the present form may well represent a true change in pronunciation and not a Portuguese mistake. P. C. Lloyd (*The Itsekiri*, London 1957, p. 193) observes, "The Itsekiri legends say that Ginuwa came from Benin with seventy chiefs... Local historians to-day can remember the titles of less than half of these." If the origin of these and other titles could be identified it might add greatly to our knowledge of the political situation in Southern Nigeria in the fifteenth century and also illuminate the movement of peoples.

1. *cloths*. By custom the gifts which the Portuguese made to the chiefs in charge of trade took the form of linen cloth and were calculated in a standard piece of two-thirds of a yard. Some idea of the value represented by the "cloth" may be gathered from the fact that in 1526 a female slave could be bought in Benin for 15 "cloths". (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II. 151.69). Later the "cloth" (Portuguese, *pao*: French, *pagne*) became a money of account. According to P. C. Lloyd (*op. cit.* p.177 n.6) the standard cloth length in the nineteenth century had become a piece of 6 yards.
2. It will be noted that most of the tusks were bought in pairs, doubtless from the same animal, and that the odd tusks must have been very small. The last tusk listed was probably that mentioned on the first page of the book as weighing 11 lbs. Most of the others must have weighed less than twenty pounds. A large pair of tusks cost as much as a slave.

ī the pilot bought three tusks of ivory for xx manillas	xx m. ^{as}
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ī the pilot bought one tusk of ivory for six manillas	bj m. ^{as}
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19 tusks	261 m. ^{as}
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Purchase of coris for manillas

44 ī the pilot bought eight manillas of coris, four at five coris apiece and four at six	bij m. ^{as}
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245 ī the pilot bought forty-nine manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	Rix m. ^{as}
---	----------------------

17 ī the pilot bought xbij coris for three manillas	ij m. ^{as}
---	---------------------

25 ī the pilot bought five manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	b m. ^{as}
--	--------------------

920 ī the pilot bought one hundred and eighty-four manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	CLxxx iij m. ^{as}
--	-------------------------------

55 ī the pilot bought eleven manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	xj m. ^{as}
--	---------------------

108 ī the pilot bought eighteen manillas of coris at six coris a manilla	xbij m. ^{as}
--	-----------------------

66 ī the pilot bought eleven manillas of coris at six coris a manilla	xj m. ^{as}
---	---------------------

50 ī the pilot bought ten manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	x m. ^{as}
---	--------------------

230 ī the pilot bought forty-six manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	Rbj m. ^{as}
--	----------------------

1760	345
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+

64 ī the pilot bought sixteen manillas of coris at four coris a manilla	xbj m. ^{as}
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80 ī the pilot bought sixteen manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	xbj m. ^{as}
---	----------------------

340 ī the pilot bought sixty-eight manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	Lxbij m. ^{as}
--	------------------------

285 ī the pilot bought fifty-seven manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	Lbij m. ^{as}
--	-----------------------

110 ī the pilot bought xxij manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	xxij m. ^{as}
---	-----------------------

195 ī the pilot bought thirty-nine manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	xxxix m. ^{as}
--	------------------------

675 ī the pilot bought one hundred and thirty-five manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	Cxxxb m. ^{as}
--	------------------------

140	ī	the pilot bought xxbiij manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	xxbiij m. ^{as}
150	ī	the pilot bought thirty manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	xxx m. ^{as}
70	ī	the pilot bought fourteen manillas of coris at five coris a manilla	xiiij m. ^{as}
104	ī	the pilot bought twenty-six manillas of coris at four coris a manilla	xxbj m. ^{as}
<hr/>			<hr/>
2213			451

+

Purchase of coris for cowries¹

56	ī	the pilot bought seven "hens" of coris at eight coris a "hen"	bij hens
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Sale of the red caps

ī	the pilot sold three caps at five "hens" apiece	xb "hens"
ī	the pilot sold six red caps at five "hens" apiece	xxx "hens"
ī	the pilot sold three red caps at five "hens" apiece	xb "hens"
	this money from the caps was put into the chest containing the cowries of the cargo and was expended with the rest of the cowries in the cargo. ²	
<hr/>		<hr/>
12 caps		60 "hens"

1. *cowries*. Instead of the word *buzcos*, which was used to describe cowries in the list of the ship's cargo, the clerk of the Santa Maria da Conceição here uses the term *iguos*. The word *iguo* is still used by the Edo to describe cowrie-money and it has no derivation in Portuguese: it may be assumed therefore that the Portuguese trading in this area had borrowed the word to apply to cowries counted into monetary units. It is also reasonable to suppose that the Portuguese counted their cowries according to the locally-established units which they named *galinhas* - hens, and *cabras* - goats. These names may have been literal translations of contemporary local terms. From another ship's book (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II, 151, 69, 1526) it is known that a "goat" contained 910 cowries and a "hen" 40 cowries.
2. It is interesting to note that the pilot sold part of his merchandise for the local cowrie currency in order to use the proceeds for the purchase of slaves, etc. Presumably he did this because he found it impossible to buy slaves with his manillas and consequently needed more cowries. On 1st Sept. 1522 he had to ask the pilot of the Sam Mygell for another 30,000 cowries to meet his expenses. (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II, 149.29).

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Purchase of slaves for cowries

ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for five "goats" of cowries ¹	b "goats"
ī the pilot bought a youth aged eighteen years for five and a half "goats" of cowries	b "goats" half
ī the pilot bought a girl aged twelve years for six "goats" of cowries	bj "goats"
ī the pilot bought a man aged thirty years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged thirty years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"

7

44 "goats" half

+

ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a youth aged seventeen years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged xxbij years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a man aged xxbj years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a man aged xxbj years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"

8

56

1. Slaves are divided into four categories; girls and youths below the age of twenty, and men and women above that age. The age given must have been a very arbitrary one determined mainly by physical characteristics, but supposedly within the range of from ten to thirty years. Only one child of eight years falls outside this range. Royal instructions directed that no sick or old slaves should be bought (A.T.T. *Leis e Regimentos de Dom Manuel* fol.83r-88v. 8 Feb. 1519) so thirty years was generally accepted as the safe upper age limit. The slaves bought on this voyage were distributed as follows between the four categories: 33 girls, 22 youths, 30 women, 34 men.

+

i the pilot bought a man aged xxiiij years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i the pilot bought a woman aged xxb years for six "goats"	bj "goats"
i the pilot bought a man aged xx years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
i the pilot bought a man aged thirty years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
i the pilot bought a girl aged twelve years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
i the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i the pilot bought a man aged xxbij years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
i the pilot bought a man aged thirty years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i the pilot bought a woman aged thirty years for six "goats"	bj "goats"

9

61

+

i the pilot bought a woman aged xx years for six "goats"	bj "goats"
i the pilot bought a girl aged xx years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
i the pilot bought a man aged xx years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
i the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
i the pilot bought a man aged xx years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i the pilot bought a youth aged fifteen years for five "goats" one "hen"	b. "goats" one "hen"
i the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
i the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for six "goats" of cowries	bj "goats"
i the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for six "goats"	bj "goats"

9

58¹

Generally a lower price was paid for the youngest slaves, the lowest being 4 "goats" 2 "hens" for a youth aged ten years. The price never went above 7 "goats". Slaves bought for cowries in the Benin River in the same year cost slightly more than those bought in the Focados River; by 1526 the average price in the Benin River had risen above 8 "goats". (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II. 151.69).

1. This and a number of other page totals are slightly inaccurate.

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ī the pilot bought a youth aged fifteen years for six "goats"	bj "goats"
ī the pilot bought a girl aged ten years for six "goats"	bj "goats"
ī the pilot bought a girl aged ten years for six "goats"	bj "goats"
ī the pilot bought a girl aged ten years for six "goats"	bj "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged xxij years for six "goats"	bj "goats"
ī the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a man aged thirty years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a girl aged seventeen years for five "goats" of cowries	b "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged thirty years for six "goats"	bj "goats"

9	55
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+

ī the pilot bought a girl aged ten years for five "goats"	b "goats"
ī the pilot bought a man aged thirty years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged xxij years for six "goats"	bj "goats"
ī the pilot bought a man aged xxbij years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a youth aged eighteen years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged xxbj years for six "goats"	bj "goats"
ī the pilot bought a youth aged eighteen years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged thirty years for five "goats" of cowries	b "goats"
ī the pilot bought a youth aged eighteen years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"

9	57
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ī the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a man aged xxbij years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged xxb years for six "goats"	bj "goats"

ī the pilot bought a youth aged ten years for four and a half "goats"	iiij "goats" half
ī the pilot bought a youth aged xbj years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged thirty years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged xxb years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a youth aged ten years for four "goats" two "hens"	iiij "goats" ij "hens"
ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"

9

58

+

ī the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged thirty years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged thirty years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged xxbj years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a youth aged fifteen years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a woman aged xxb years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"

9

63

+

ī the pilot bought a woman aged thirty years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a man aged thirty years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
ī the pilot bought a youth aged fifteen years for five "goats" of cowries	b "goats"
ī the pilot bought a youth aged sixteen years for six "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"

ī the pilot bought a woman aged thirty years for five “goats” of cowries	b “goats”
ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for six and a half “goats” of cowries	bj “goats” half.
ī the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”
ī the pilot bought a girl aged fifteen years for five “goats” and four “hens” of cowries	b “goats” iiij “hens”
ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”

10

63iiij “hens”

+

ī the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”
ī the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”
ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”
ī the pilot bought a man aged xx years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”
ī the pilot bought a woman aged xxb years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”
ī the pilot bought a woman aged xxb years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”
ī the pilot bought a woman aged thirty years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”
ī the pilot bought a youth aged sixteen years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”
ī the pilot bought a man aged xxbij years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”
ī the pilot bought a girl aged ten years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”

10

70

+

ī the pilot bought a girl aged ten years for four and a half “goats”	iiij “goats” half
ī the pilot bought a woman aged xx years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”
ī the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven “goats”	bij “goats”
ī the pilot bought a girl aged ten years for six “goats” of cowries	bj “goats”
ī the pilot bought a man aged thirty years for seven “goats” of cowries	bij “goats”

i	the pilot bought a youth aged fifteen years for six "goats" of cowries	bj "goats"
i	the pilot bought a woman aged xx years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i	the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i	the pilot bought a youth aged eighteen years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
i	the pilot bought a woman aged xxb years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"

10

65 half

+

	the pilot bought a woman aged xxb years for seven "goats"	bij "goats"
i	the pilot bought a man aged xxbj years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i	the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i	the pilot bought a woman aged xx years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i	the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i	the pilot bought a girl aged eighteen years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i	the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i	the pilot bought a youth aged twelve years for five "goats" of cowries	b "goats"
i	the pilot bought a man aged xxb years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
i	the pilot bought a youth aged twelve years for five and a half "goats"	b "goats" half

10

66 half

+

	the pilot bought a man aged xxbj years for seven "goats" of cowries	bij "goats"
ii	the pilot bought a girl aged xxb years for seven "goats", he received two slaves in place of this one —sc.— a youth of eighteen years and a man of xxb	bij "goats" ij slaves

3

14

+	
slaves bought for manillas ¹	
i the pilot bought a woman aged thirty years for fifty manillas ²	L manillas
i the pilot bought a girl aged eight years for forty-five manillas	Rb manillas
i the pilot bought a woman aged thirty years for fifty manillas	L manillas
i the pilot bought a woman aged xxbj for fifty manillas	L manillas
i the pilot bought a youth aged ten years for fifty manillas	L manillas

5	245
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+	
i the pilot bought a youth aged fifteen years for fifty manillas	L manillas
i the pilot bought a youth aged ten years for fifty manillas	L manillas

2	100
---	-----

+

Roll of the slaves allowed the company from their subsistence

i the pilot brings two slaves from his subsistence and the one due to Maia, ³ making three slaves	iiij slaves
i the clerk brings another slave from his subsistence	j slave
i the boatswain brings another slave from his subsistence	j slave

-
1. In the introduction it has been suggested that these slaves were bought in the Benin River because the clerk of the Samta Maria da Comçeçam records that slaves could not be bought for manillas in the Forcados River. The fact that there are no men among them is a further indication that they came from Benin, for Benin custom forbade the sale of men slaves although the Oba occasionally "opened the market" in them as a special favour. The pilot of the Sam Mygell bought only female slaves in the Benin River at this same time. When the Portuguese first traded with Benin, however, there seems to have been no such restriction.
 2. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the Portuguese were able to purchase slaves for 12-15 manillas. (Pereira. *op. cit.* p. 134). Competition between the São Tomé contractors had by 1517 forced the price up to 57 large manillas. (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* I. 22. 70). When taking the trade back into his own hands the King of Portugal ordered in 1519 that no more than 40 manillas should be given for any slave (A.T.T. *Leis e Regimentos de Dom Manuel*. 83r.-88v. 8 Feb. 1519), but by 1522 the maximum price was fixed at 50 manillas which was maintained at least until 1532. On the basis of these slave prices it is possible to calculate that one manilla was equivalent in purchasing power to three "hens" of cowries.
 3. ref. note 3, p. 301.

i	Jorguc Fialho seaman brings another slave from his subsistence	j slave
i	Fernam Diz brings another slave from his subsistence	j slave
i	Affomso Allvarez seaman brings another slave from his subsistence	j slave
i	Belchior Lopez seaman brings another slave from his subsistence	j slave

+

Roll of slaves for the ship-boys bought with the King's goods.

7	"goats"	i	the pilot bought a slave for seven "goats" from the cargo and gave it to Bras the ship-boy of Lopo Ferreira for his subsistence ¹	j slave
7	"goats"	i	the pilot bought a slave for seven "goats" from the cargo and gave it to Fernando ship-boy of Lopo Ferreira for his subsistence	j slave
7	"goats"	i	the pilot bought a slave for seven "goats" from the cargo and gave it to Pedro ship-boy of Antonio Diaz for his subsistence	j slave
7	"goats"	i	the pilot bought a slave for seven "goats" from the cargo and gave it to Bras ship-boy of Joham Mateus for his subsistence	j slave
7	"goats"	i	the pilot bought another slave for seven "goats" from the cargo and gave it to Joao ship-boy of Lourenço Affomso for his subsistence	j slave
7	"goats"	i	the pilot bought a slave for seven "goats" and gave it to Our Lady	j slave
7	"goats"	i	the pilot bought a slave for seven "goats" and gave it to the hospital	j slave

+

i We reached the Rio dos Forcados on the first day of the month of April and we at once began to trade, and from that time to the time we left the pilot could not obtain slaves for manillas² either

1. Apparently all these ship-boys were slaves, so that the slaves bought with cowries from the cargo for their subsistence would in fact be given to their masters. Later the King of Portugal issued privileges to subjects resident in Portugal allowing them to place a slave as ship-boy on royal vessels trading between São Tomé and the coast and to receive the slaves earned in this manner. e.g. A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II. 172.9, Oct. 1531.
2. Although both cowries and manillas were almost certainly used as currency in this area before the advent of the Portuguese, the stock of manillas was greatly increased from European sources and their purchasing power rapidly declined. For example, in 1499 Pero de Caminha informed the King of Portugal that he had discovered rivers in the Bights of Benin and

for the cargo or for the company. The pilot took cowries from the cargo and bought these slaves for the ship-boys and for Our Lady and the hospital because he could buy no slaves for them with manillas and because the cargo was completed and we wished to leave for the Island. He gave the slaves on condition they might have them if the factor and officials¹ approved and if it were to the service of our Lord King, otherwise they might not have them.

- | | | |
|---|---|---------|
| i | Martinho ship-boy brings another slave from his subsistence | j slave |
| i | Jorgue ship-boy brings another slave from his subsistence | j slave |

+

Roll of the slaves that died

- | | | |
|---|--|---------|
| i | on the xx day of the month of June while in the Rio dos Forcados a slave died and was cast into the sea before the ship's company ² | j slave |
| a | male slave died on the xiiij day of the month of July and the company saw him cast into the sea, I the clerk being in Benin | j slave |
| i | another male slave of the cargo died on the xb day of the month of July and the company saw him cast into the sea, I the clerk being in Benin | j slave |
| i | a girl of the cargo died on the xbij day of the month of July and the company saw her cast into the sea, I the clerk being in Benin | j slave |
| i | a man of the cargo died on the xxj day of the month of July and the ship's company saw him cast into the sea, I the clerk being in Benin | j slave |

Biafra where slaves could be had for no more than 6 manillas. By the time Pereira wrote the *Esmeraldo* (c. 1506) the price in Benin was as much as 15 manillas, and by 1517 it had reached 57 manillas. The stock of cowries was also enormously increased by Portuguese imports, but this began later than the import of manillas, probably only a few years before 1520, so that cowries may well have been at a premium at this time.

1. i.e. the factor and officials of the royal *feitoria* in São Tomé.
2. This procedure was according to regulations: "If while trading there or on the return voyage any slave of the King should die, he shall not be cast into the sea without it first being ascertained that he is a slave of the King: the clerk shall enter it in his book thus, on such a day of such a month and year, in such a port or anchorage a slave was found dead and cast into the sea in the presence of the pilot, the boatswain and some other witnesses from the crew, and all shall sign the entry." (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II. 149. 29. 15 April, 1522). In fact the entries in this book are not signed by the witnesses: this, and a number of other irregularities, may have been the reason for sending it to Lisbon. The King's slaves were identified by a cross branded on the right arm immediately after they were purchased.

- i a youth of the cargo died on the xiiij day of the month of August and the ship's company saw him cast into the sea, I the clerk being in Benin. j slave

+

Expenditure of manillas on yam, oil, awnings and loin cloths for the cargo.

- i the pilot bought eighty manillas of yam¹ for the cargo Lxxx m.^{as}
 i the pilot bought one hundred and xx manillas of yam for the cargo C.xx m.^{as}
 i the pilot bought from the Captain of the Rio dos Forcados and from the Lysa² jointly four hundred manillas of yam for the cargo iiij.^c m.^{as}
 i the pilot bought from the canoes at the market³ one hundred manillas of yam for the cargo C. m.^{as}
 i the pilot bought from the canoes at the market one hundred and eighty manillas of yam for the cargo C. Lxxx m.^{as}
 i the pilot bought from the canoes at the market one hundred and xx manillas of yam for the cargo C. xx m.^{as}

Oil

- i the pilot spent sixty manillas on one pipe of oil⁴ for the cargo Lx m.^{as}
 i the pilot spent one hundred and six manillas in occasional purchase of oil for the cargo C. bj m.^{as}
 i the pilot spent thirty-two manillas on mats and poles to make an awning for the ship xxxij m.^{as}

1198

+

- i the pilot bought forty loin-cloths for the cargo at two manillas for each cloth which makes eighty manillas Lxxx m.^{as}
 i the pilot bought a hide for the pump from Jorge Fialho for twelve manillas xij m.^{as}
 i the pilot bought twenty manillas of osiers for the factory xx m.^{as}

1. Unfortunately there is no means of estimating the quantity of yam represented by this purchase.
2. One of the six Iwarefa chiefs of Ondo bears the title *Lisa*. In certain respects his functions appear similar to those of the *Oliha* of Benin.
3. This reference to canoes at the market is an indication that large quantities of yams were brought down by canoe from up-country to supply ships and settlements on the lower river. A similar trade was carried on in the Bonny River.
4. one pipe of oil = 105 gallons measured by a standard wine-cask.

i	the pilot bought one manilla of clay	one m. ^a
i	also two of malageta for the slaves	ij m. ^{as}
		<hr/>
		115
+		
Manillas which the pilot gave the company for their subsistence ¹		
i	the pilot gave Fernam Diz seaman forty-two for his subsistence	Rij m. ^{as}
i	also the pilot gave Jorgue Fialho seaman sixty-five manillas for his subsistence	Lxb m. ^{as}
i	also the pilot gave the boatswain fifty-five manillas for his subsistence	Lb m. ^{as}
i	also the pilot gave Belchior Lopez seaman ten manillas for his subsistence	x m. ^{as}
		<hr/>
		172
+		
i	he gave the ship-boys ² of our Lord King twenty manillas	xx m. ^{as}
i	he gave Bras ship-boy of Joham Mateus twenty manillas	xx m. ^{as}
i	the pilot gave me the clerk fifty manillas	L m. ^{as}
		<hr/>
		90
		83 ³
		172
		<hr/>
		345

+

On the xxij day of the month of June⁴ we had sailed as far as Cabo Feroso and while doubling the cape at night we ran into a violent storm of wind and rain with heavy seas which opened the ship in many places, especially at the bow through a seam some three

-
1. Presumably these manillas were issued so that the crew might buy provisions for themselves, although it is not clear why the number issued should have varied so much, nor why some of the crew received nothing.
 2. There must have been two of them. (ref. note 2, p. 305).
 3. These 83 manillas are not explained at all.
 4. The 22 June was the day on which the ship sailed from the Forcados River. It must have covered some 60 miles before running into the squall, a phenomenon with which the Portuguese were well acquainted. Pereira observes (*op. cit.* p.140). "in some months of the year there are heavy thunderstorms accompanied by very strong winds; and the pilot

spans¹ long. This made so much water that it could not be kept down, but it pleased Our Lord to close it. After this seam had closed the ship began to open so many more that there was no remedy but to trust in God. Sailing thus in such distress that there were no longer hands to work the ship or to bail out the water, the company -sc- the boatswain, Fernam Diz, Affonso Alvarez, Jorge Fialho and Belchior Lopez—began to beg the pilot in the name of God and of our Lord King that he would put into Benin since the ship was sinking and there were no hands to work or sail her.² The pilot, recognising the distress we were in, instructed me the clerk to make a record of everything which I did as follows.

Francisco Fernandez



ī On the sixth day of the month of July in the year one thousand five hundred xxij, after we had put into harbour and were lying in the port of Oeyre, the pilot Jorgue Mendez instructed me the clerk to go to Benin to ask Machim Fernandez, pilot of the ship Sam Mygell, in the name of our Lord King that he should come directly and with all speed to take over the cargo which we had gathered in the Rio dos Forcados because we had put into harbour from Cabo Feroso with the ship leaking and taking in much water. For that reason he dared not carry the said cargo in the said ship. I the clerk went to Benin³ and made the request, and the said Machim Fernandez made haste to leave Benin and came to Oeyre and took over the following cargo.

ī On the xxbij day of the month of August as soon as I the clerk reached Oeyre with the pilot Machim Fernandez, the pilot Jorgue Mendez told me to record two slaves who escaped during the watch of Jorgue Fialho⁴ and five that had died. I the clerk questioned the boatswain Christovao Fernandez whether it was as the pilot had stated, and the said Christovao Fernandez replied that he had not to

commanding a ship, as soon as he sees this, must strike his sails, for these storms burst with such fury that the ship will otherwise be sent to the bottom, or the mast and yards be broken and the sails lost".

1. three spans = 27 inches.
2. The ship put into the harbour of Oeyre on 6 July, so it must have drifted along the coast for two weeks in a waterlogged condition.
3. Fernandez arrived in Benin City on 8 July and left with the pilot of the Sam Mygell on 14 August. They were at Ughoton until 27 August gathering provisions and left that day for Oeyre. (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II.149.29).
4. cf. the instructions given to the pilot of the Sam Mygell: "You will keep good watch upon the slaves when they are on board the ship so that they do not run away by night or day. For we advise you that should any run away, either you shall pay or the person through whose fault or negligence it happened..." (A.T.T. *Corpo Cronologico* II. 149. 29).

make his report to me but to the Corregedor¹ who had placed him on the ship. Then I the clerk immediately questioned the company -sc- Affomso Alvarez, Fernam Diz, Belchior Lopez, Jorge Fialho, seamen of the said ship Comçeïcam—and all said jointly that it was so, and I the clerk recorded in my book the two escaped slaves and the five dead slaves.

+

ī On the tenth day of the month of July, while I the clerk was in Benin, three male slaves threw themselves into the sea during the watch of Jorgue Fialho seaman, Fernando ship-boy of Lopo Ferreira and Jorgue ship-boy of Nuno Vaaz; of these three slaves they caught one and two were lost.

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1. The Corregedor was the royal governor of São Tomé. The reply of the boatswain suggests that he had been placed aboard the ship to keep an eye on the other officers.

THREE FORGOTTEN EXPLORERS OF THE LATTER HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THEIR JOURNEYS TO BORNU

(Abridged from a paper read to the Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria held at Jos, December 1958.)

by

R. E. ELLISON

ANYONE INTERESTED in the history of Northern Nigeria in the 19th century will have read the accounts of the travels of explorers such as Major Dixon Denham and Heinrich Barth. Denham was accompanied by Clapperton and Oudney; Barth, at various stages of his five-year journey, by Richardson, Overweg and Vogel. The massive tomes in which their travels were so meticulously recorded have the advantage of being written in English. Invaluable additional material relating to both these explorers is to be found in "The Sultanate of Bornu" and "Some notes on languages of the Western Sudan" by P. A. Benton. My purpose in this paper is to focus attention on three notable travellers who visited Northern Nigeria during the second half of the 19th century. Although these men made important contributions to African exploration, their names and achievements find no place in the existing textbooks.

The first of these was Gerhard Rohlfs, 1832 to 1896, who crossed the Sahara from Tripoli to Bornu and continued thence to Lagos in 1866 and 1867. He records that he was appalled by the evidence of the ghastly slave trade that he saw during his trek across the desert. The route from Kuka¹ to Tripoli via Bilma, famous for its salt, and Murzuk, was essentially the slave route from South to North. The slave caravans normally took four months to complete the journey of some 1,600 miles. Rohlfs, who reached Kuka on July 22nd 1866, estimated that every year about 10,000 slaves were despatched from Kuka, the main centre of this trade. One large caravan of some 4,000 slaves set forth from Kuka during his stay there. We have no means of checking his estimate of the volume of the traffic. In common with 19th century Abolitionists he exaggerates the volume of the trade and advocates its displacement by legitimate commerce.

1. I speak of Kuka, or Kuwa, as the Kanuri themselves always call it, rather than Kukawa since the travellers always referred to it by this name and not by the adjectival form Kukawa meaning "having a baobab tree".

In 1866 at the time of Rohlfs' visit, Shehu Umar, the son of the Shehu Laminu of Denham's time, was two thirds through his long reign of 46 years. The two men got on very well, and in accordance with precedent Rohlfs was given a Muhammadan name, Idris. He gives us a careful description of Kuka, coinciding with and amplifying that of Barth. It will be recalled that Kuka had been built by Shehu Laminu in 1814 and had been sacked and destroyed by Muhammed Sheriff, King of Wadai, in 1846. It had then been rebuilt by Shehu Umar in two sections; an Eastern town, which contained the houses of the Shehu and the court notables, and a Western town which was specially the trading area and contained the great Monday market, so vividly described by Barth. The space separating the two towns extended for about a mile and was known as "gəmzəgənyī". Both sections of the town were surrounded by walls 20 feet high, and the population was estimated by Rohlfs at about 60,000. He had some shrewd observations to make upon the Government of Bornu. "Though in form constitutional", he wrote, "the Government of Bornu is as despotic and unfettered as that of Morocco. The present condition of the kingdom, indeed, resembles that of the feudal states of Europe in the middle ages". He went on to note that the military power, totalling 25-30,000 soldiers, was contributed on a feudal basis by the chiefs throughout the kingdom. About 1,000 foot and 1,000 horsemen were armed with flint guns and, surprisingly, there were 20 cannon of undetermined calibre which Rohlfs states were cast in Kuka.

While he was staying in Kuka, Rohlfs compiled important vocabularies for the Teda, Kanuri, Budduma and Musgu languages, supplementing the valuable linguistic researches of Barth who had compiled vocabularies for 40 languages of Bornu, Adamawa and the Shari basin. On leaving Kuka, Rohlfs journeyed South to Uje district which today contains the headquarters of the Province. He described Uje as the most fertile and populous portion of all Bornu. Its chief town was the market town of Maiduguri, from which the present Government station of Maiduguri, some three miles away, takes its name. It then had a population of 12,000, mainly of the Gamargu tribe.

Rohlfs continued his journey through Bauchi, then known as Yakubu from the name of its founder, which he states was surrounded by walls that took three and half hours to circumvent. Early in 1867 he crossed the Niger at Raba, a little below Jebba and the former capital of the Nupe kings. He passed on to Ilorin, at that time a large town with walls twelve miles in circumference. This town had an extensive trade with merchants from the Hausa states. He passed through Yorubaland and eventually emerged at Lagos. With good cause the title of his book was "Quer durch Afrika"—straight through Africa, from Tripoli to Lagos. Subsequently he made an expedition in 1873-4 through the Libyan desert. He later became

German Consul in Tripoli and in 1884 was promoted to the post of German Consul General in Zanzibar.¹ He died in 1896 at the age of 64.

The next traveller is the German, Gustav Nachtigal, 1831-1885. His activities as a German Government Agent are well-known but not his work as an explorer. He was a medical doctor and had been resident in Tripoli for some time before he set off on his momentous five-year expedition in 1869. This expedition was made under the auspices of the German Government. One of its chief purposes was that Nachtigal should present gifts from King William of Prussia to Shehu Umar of Bornu in recognition of his kindness to the German explorers Barth, Overweg, Vogel and Rohlf.² These gifts included a sumptuous gilded throne upholstered in red velvet and a life-size portrait of the King, neither of them very convenient loads for a camel to transport across the Sahara.³ Setting out from Tripoli in February 1869, he reached Murzuk, capital of the Fezzan, after thirty-six days travelling. Here he fell in with that remarkable Dutch woman, the adventurous and courageous traveller Alexine Tinne, worthy to be ranked with Lady Hester Stanhope of a former, and Gertrude Bell and Freya Stark of a later, age. It was planned that they should travel together to Bornu. But before setting out for Bornu Nachtigal was keen to visit the unknown and unexplored country of Tibesti in the heart of Sahara and some distance to the East of the Kuka-Murzuk caravan route. His exploration of this inhospitable, wild and mountainous country was pioneering work of the first order. No European had ventured there before. He found the Tebu inhabitants most unfriendly, and after enduring very severe hardships and privations he was lucky to escape with his life and to be able to return to Murzuk. It was on his return there that he heard about the tragic end of Alexine Tinne and her party. They had been brutally murdered by an Arab on the road to Ghat.⁴

Leaving Murzuk on 18th April 1870 he reached Ngigmi, the first outpost of the Bornu kingdom, on 28th June. He entered Kuka on 6th July, 1870. Here he was given a tumultuous welcome, and the Shehu's eldest son, Abba Bukar (later himself Shehu) came out to meet him and escort him into the capital. His account contains many descriptive passages on places of interest and sketches of many of the Bornu personalities of the day. Of Shehu Umar he writes as follows:-

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1. Heichen, *Afrika Hand-Lexikon*, 1885.
 2. Evans-Lewis, *Germany and Africa*, p. 71.
Details from G. Nachtigal, *Sahara et Sudan*, Vol. I. (French translation).
 4. Alexine Tinne is also referred to in some detail by:-
Hanns Vischer, *Across the Sahara*;
Nachtigal, *op. cit.*, Vol. I pp. 64, 79;
Monteil, *De St. Louis à Tripoli par le lac Tchad*, (1895) p.428.

“He was very clean in appearance, a man of about 50 years old” (60 would have been nearer the mark since he had already reigned for 35 years), “of middle height, rather fat, with black skin and a white beard and very few teeth; he had a good and intelligent appearance”.

We need not concern ourselves with the personalities of the Bornu court, so vividly described by Nachtigal; we can only take a glance at one of them, the potent and influential counsellor Laminu. He was the most popular figure in Bornu. In Nachtigal's words, “He was feared by the malefactors and was odious to the intriguers at court, but highly estimated by the private people, greatly regarded by the Shehu, whose trusted counsellor he was...” His favourite passion was the care of his kitchen and he boasted that he employed the finest cooks to be had between the Nile and the Niger.

A factor that served to strengthen the friendship between Nachtigal and Laminu was the former's Piedmontese cook Giuseppe Valpreda who had accompanied Nachtigal from Tripoli.¹ He was a hard-working man, an excellent cook who in Kuka made himself very acceptable to the Shehu and to Laminu for both of whom he used to concoct tasty dishes. Later on, thinking that he would rapidly acquire wealth and position, he left Nachtigal's service and told the Shehu that he was at heart a Muslim and disliked serving a Christian; he sought to prove this by becoming converted to Islam. The Shehu probably realised his perfidy, but did nothing to hinder his conversion. When shortly afterwards the great Laminu died Nachtigal, who had been treating him with medicines, was suspected of having poisoned him and his former cook was one of his bitterest accusers. It was in these circumstances and in order to release Nachtigal from a false situation that the Shehu in March, 1871, gave him the means to make a visit to the North East.

Nachtigal's first stay in Kuka lasted from July, 1870 till March, 1871. He then left on his expedition to the country of Kanem, Lake Fittri and Borku, to the N.E. of Lake Chad. He returned to Kuka in January 1872 then went off again and returned in September, 1872, this time remaining in Kuka till February, 1873.

His description of Kuka itself does not add very much to the accounts given by Barth and Rohlfs. He records that “Kuka is always full of strangers, as many merchants as there are pilgrims and adventurers. The fame of Shehu Umar attracts numerous visitors, be it from Mecca, Medina, Morocco, Tunis, Egypt, Timbuktu or Senegal”. He tells us much about the political situation of the day, the composition of the Shehu's council and the dominating influence in that council of the powerful office holders. Many of these were

1. Benton, *Sultanate of Bornu* p. 25;
Nachtigal, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 61.

of slave origin, notably the Kaigama, Kazalla Bilal, who was the military chief of the Southern districts and a noted warrior of over 50 years of age. His grandson is the present holder of the office of Kaigama in Bornu. Nachtigal also mentions the position of the Galadima who occupied a high place in the hierarchy. He was less of an office holder than a feudal prince who held sway over the western districts of the country with his H.Q. at Nguru.

Of the political state of Bornu at this time Nachtigal records as follows:—

“Shehu Umar was a feeble man, entirely at the mercy of his greedy counsellors. His long reign had blunted the new vital energy that his father, Shehu Laminu, had injected into the Kanuri. Trade had declined from what it was in Barth’s time; favouritism was rampant at the court and was paralysing all the national effort; the pagan tribes on the frontiers of the Kingdom were taking full advantage of this weakness at the centre”.

On leaving Kuka for the final time in February, 1873, Nachtigal eventually emerged at Khartoum in November, 1874, five and a half years since he set out from Tripoli. He was the first European to have explored the Tibesti area in the central Sahara, the area of Lake Fittri, Kanem and Borku to the N.E. of Chad and to have emerged through Wadai to Darfur and Khartoum.

Nachtigal was also a linguistic scholar and historian of note. He left grammatical and vocabulary material of 13 languages of Bornu and adjacent countries; the documents left by him form today the sources for the study of the botany, zoology and geology of the central Sudan.

Regarding Nachtigal’s subsequent career we can briefly record that he was present, with Rohlf, as an official representative of the German Empire, at the International Conference at Brussels in 1876.¹ Out of this conference emerged the German African Society.² In May 1884 Nachtigal was appointed by Bismarck as Imperial Consul-General to the West Coast of Africa. He arrived off what is now French Guinea in July 1884 in the gun-boat ‘Möwe’ and anchored off Little Popo which he proceeded to annexe for the German Government. From this annexation resulted the German Protectorate of Togoland. He then continued in the ‘Möwe’ to the Cameroons. Here Nachtigal anticipated the British Consul Hewett by one week and succeeded in making a treaty with King Bell of the Cameroons on July 14th, 1884, which resulted in the German annexation of the Cameroons. He died in the gun-boat ‘Möwe’ on April 20th, 1885 off Cape Palmas at the age of 54.

1. Heichen, *op. cit.*

2. Evans-Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

Immediately after the signing of the Anglo-French Agreement of 1890 which determined the boundary of Nigeria and French West Africa the third explorer appeared upon the scene. The French Government commissioned an army officer Capitaine P. L. Monteil to reconnoitre the Say-Barua line which formed the boundaries of Nigeria and French West Africa. His expedition set out from St. Louis at the mouth of the Senegal River on the 9th October, 1890. After leaving Segu they emerged at Kano in November, 1891. From there Monteil travelled to Kuka where he had an enforced stay of just over 4 months. He eventually reached Tripoli in December 1892 after a journey from St. Louis that had lasted for 27 months and after covering almost 5,000 miles.

From Say he proceeded to Argungu and from thence to Sokoto.¹ Here he was cordially greeted and entertained by the Sultan Sarkin Musulmi Abdurrahman. Both he and the Waziri went out of their way to be polite to Monteil. Sarkin Abdurrahman had taken a Nazarite vow not to shave his head until he had conquered Argungu. He was then aged about 55. From his residence at Wurno the Sultan gave Monteil safe conducts to the Emir of Kano, the Lamido of Adamawa and to the Shehu of Bornu. He left Sokoto on 29th October, 1891 and arrived in Kano on 23rd November.

His stay there lasted for three and a half months. He has given us a detailed account of Kano City, its administrative system, its people, trade and market. The Emir, who then spent most of his time in his residence at Fanisau, a few miles North of the City, was Muhammad Bello, aged between 65-70. Monteil describes Kano as being the commercial capital of the Central Sudan.² Cowrie currency prevailed. Industrially Kano was chiefly famous for its weaving, dyeing and leather work, while a large portion of its trade was concerned with slaves and kola nuts. Monteil estimates that almost four fifths of the population of Kano were slaves or of slave origin. The lot of the captive was not always harsh and frequently they acquired great social and economic importance and attained high political office.

It took Monteil some time to organise his caravan for Bornu. His route eastwards lay through Hadeija, a town with a well maintained high wall.³ He entered Bornu territory at the village of Madia and from then on followed a West to East route. He was welcomed by the Galadima at his newly built village of Bakusso with some show of cordiality which proved to be only on the surface. He left Bakusso on 6th March. His next important stop was Borsari where he stayed till the 31st March in order that the Shehu might be notified of the imminence of his arrival. During this time he felt that he was

1. Monteil, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 255 et seq.

3. *Ibid.* pp. 300 et seq.

being spied upon continually. However, the report on him by Kazalla Maina, a favourite and very influential slave of the Shehu, was a favourable one, so he was allowed to continue his journey. He made his way steadily to Kuka. Outside Kuka he was welcomed by an escort of 150 horsemen, richly caparisoned, which included the leading military notabilities of Bornu.

Monteil's entry into Kuka on 10th April, 1892 was quite a triumphal occasion.¹ The whole population, which he estimated at between 50-60,000, had turned out to meet him. He was admitted into the Shehu's presence. On either side were seated the princes, all wearing gowns of imported blue cloth and fezzes. The Shehu himself was wearing white silk with a white turban. Monteil declared his mission in the following terms:—

"I am charged by the King of the French" (in reality it was President Carnot) "to come and salute the powerful Shehu of Bornu, Ashimi, whose fame has reached him by means of the travellers who visited his grandfather Shehu Laminu and his father Shehu Umar. Since no Frenchman has ever before come to Bornu my sovereign has sent me in order that acquaintance may be made and good friendship result". The Shehu welcomed him cordially and promised to give him guides for his journey to Tripoli. Monteil's presents to the Shehu included a fine copy of the Arabian Nights in Arabic which much delighted him.

He paid a second visit to the Shehu who assured him that as soon as a caravan for Murzuk was formed he would be able to depart with it. But in the event he had to wait for four months and the arrangements, which were always being postponed and altered, involved continual intrigue, bribes and presents, particularly as these concerned the Arab Consul, Sherif Shashimi. Monteil practically became the prisoner of the Shehu who was chiefly interested in extorting one present after another from his guest.

Monteil gives us a careful description of Shehu Ashimi as he was in 1892, the last year of his reign and the year before Rabeh's invasion. The power of the central authority in Bornu had sunk very low owing to the personal indolence of the Shehu. He was a man of between 50 and 55 and had begun his reign in 1885. He was an honest and pious Muslim and something of a philosopher and scholar. But he was totally lacking in energy and left the political control of the kingdom to his favourite slaves. He was more interested in his personal comfort and his women. Monteil says that he kept 400 women in his establishment and had some 350 children. There was also a host of uncles, brothers and nephews whom he was expected to maintain. He detested the thought of war and was, in this respect, a striking contrast to his elder brother Bukar who had preceded him as Shehu. He distrusted Abba Kyari, Shehu Bukar's

1. Monteil, *op. cit.*, Chap. XII.

son, who had inherited his father's warlike character and was very popular with the people. He it was who rallied the Bornu army after Rabeh had sacked Kuka in 1893, but was later captured and slain by Rabeh. The present Shehu of Bornu is his son.

Monteil's views on the political state of Bornu bear out those recorded twenty-two years earlier by Nachtigal.¹ The central authority was ineffective and impotent. The chiefs of the districts, known as "Chima", exacted tax from their districts, but seldom visited them. Over his powerful vassals the Shehu had lost all control. Danger threatened the Kingdom from all sides. But it was from Baghirmi to the S.E. that the most alarming danger was threatening. Monteil records that one day when he was at the palace there was pointed out to him the son of the Ban of Baghirmi who had just arrived in Kuka to seek the aid of the Shehu and his army against a powerful bandit leader from the East who, in several years, had pillaged Wadai and the richest parts of Baghirmi and was even then preparing to launch himself upon the capital of Baghirmi.² This was Rabeh.³ The Shehu was deaf to these entreaties and the following year was himself to suffer when, after the complete defeat of his army at Amja and Ngala, he was driven from Kuka and was shortly afterwards slain on the orders of his nephew Abba Kyari.

Reference has already been made when considering Nachtigal, to his Piedmontese cook Giuseppe Valpreda who, it will be recalled, had become a Muslim with the name of Muhammed el Musulmani and had remained in Bornu when Nachtigal left for Kanem and the North East. Twenty-two years later, at the time of Monteil's visit, he was still living in Kuka and may lay claim to have been the first and only permanent European settler in Bornu.⁴ He had gained nothing by his apostasy and never acquired any influence in Kuka. After Nachtigal's departure he cared for the Shehu's garden, looked after the rifles presented by Nachtigal and cooked dishes on important occasions. He also indulged in a little private slave trading with Tripoli. During Shehu Bukar's reign his fortunes improved and the Shehu took him on his campaigns, but after his death his lot again declined and at the time of Monteil's visit he was a complete nonentity, a "Distressed Italian subject". He lived in squalor in a small house against the palace wall and was regarded by all as one of the Shehu's slaves. He complained to Monteil that he had been the prisoner of the Shehu for 21 years. He was now aged 57, and was brown like a Saharan Arab. He had almost forgotten his mother tongue and Monteil found him quite useless as an interpreter.

1. Monteil, op. cit., pp. 340 et seq.

2. Ibid., p. 345.

3. For Rabeh's early life see Mockler-Ferryman, *British Nigeria*, (1900) pp. 352 et seq., also Lady Lugard, *A Tropical Dependency*, (1905) p. 400.

4. Monteil, op. cit., pp. 348 et seq.

He died at Yo in the following year when fleeing with most of the population of Kuka before the onslaught of Rabeh.

After endless delays, intrigues and bribes, Monteil eventually managed to leave Kuka on 15th August, 1892, after an enforced stay of just over 4 months. His party had 12 camels and 2 horses and the whole caravan consisted of 78 camels, 7 horses, some sheep for slaughter, 30 men and 30 young slaves.

Yo was reached on August 19th; Barua, described as "a miserable collection of ruined hovels with no importance at all", on the 22nd and Bilma at the southern end of the Kauwar oasis on 12th September. Here Monteil rested for 17 days. On 25th October he reached Murzuk where he stayed till 5th November. He finally reached Tripoli on 10th December, taking exactly the same time over this section of the journey as had Nachtigal. He landed at Marseilles on 18th December. It was 27 months since the party had set out from St. Louis.

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HENRY VENN AND THE POLICY OF DEVELOPMENT

by

J. F. A. AJAYI

THE HISTORY of European administrations in Tropical Africa has revolved largely round what is comprehensively referred to as the "Native Question". It seems there are broadly two things Europeans can do with the 'native': they can either attempt to develop—and spoil—him, or try to preserve—and stultify—him. It is often argued that the French are Developers and the English Preservers. In fact the distinction between them is obscured in at least two different ways.

First, both Developers and Preservers have the obligation to promote trade with the various ruling nations. This obligation is at the very root of the whole idea of holding overseas territories. And so compelling is the influence of this obligation on policy that no ruling nation can, or in fact really seeks to, leave the social or political situation in its subject territories undisturbed. Within this general obligation to promote trade, there are usually three possible trends of policy, not two. Where the ruling nation is preoccupied by the problem of creating a stable local administration, it strengthens the hands of the chiefs; where it puts economic development first, it encourages the creation of a new middle class of educated Africans, *evolués*, *assimilados*; and where there is a strong settler influence, it directs policy to the creation of a large labour force and becomes consciously indifferent to the consequences of such a policy on the African community.

Secondly, in most ruling nations, you find both Developers and Preservers at the same time, though at different periods one or the other may be predominant; and they practise at different times modifications of the three possible trends of policy side by side in different territories, sometimes one after the other in the same territory as situations or the personalities of governors change. This needs to be emphasised. The reputation of English Preservers is so very high that the Developers who, at least in West Africa, were the first in the field, are not often remembered. The object of this paper is to suggest that in the middle of the nineteenth century when Britain controlled only a few enclaves on the West African Coast but wielded influence over a much wider area, the dominant theme of her policy was social and economic development and the encouragement of an African middle class, not the preservation of the traditional

authorities; that probably the most important exponent of the policy was Henry Venn, Honorary Secretary of the C.M.S.: and that though his ideas were never fully implemented, he pushed them far enough to have left his mark on the history of West Africa and, at least for this reason, he deserves some study.

Henry Venn became a member of the Parent Committee of the Church Missionary Society in 1835 and was soon recognised as its leading figure. He became Honorary Secretary of the Society in 1841 and was to remain so for 31 years (1841-1872). Besides serving on two Royal Commissions towards the end of his life, he held no other public office and his ideas can hardly be discussed without reference to the Society to which he devoted his life and whose needs were always his first consideration. Like the C.M.S., he grew out of two different movements: the Evangelical and the Humanitarian. His grandfather, a junior contemporary of John Wesley, was one of the leaders of the Evangelical Revival within the Anglican Church. His father who was one of the founders of the C.M.S. was during Henry Venn's first 17 years¹ rector of Clapham, high priest of the "Clapham Sect". Thus while it was the Evangelical tradition in the family that drew him away from lecturing mathematics and a Fellowship of Queen's College, Cambridge, towards the Church and divinity and missionary work, it was the Humanitarian movement that pointed out his special field of interest as West Africa.

At the time when Venn became Secretary of the C.M.S., the Abolitionists were embarking on an important change of tactics. Hitherto they had sought to achieve abolition mainly by a system of laws and treaties with other European and American countries with little reference to Africa itself. By 1841, they were advocating taking the campaign inside Africa and seeking to regenerate the continent 'by the Bible and the Plough':² that, it was argued, was the only effective way to end the trans-Atlantic slave trade and to make amends to 'down-trodden' Africa for the many wrongs Europe had done her. Further, it was said, the climate was unfavourable to white men, but fortunately there were thousands of liberated Africans in Sierra Leone and emancipated ones in the West Indies and Brazil, mostly professing Christians, many of them able to read and write, several artisans, schoolmasters, evangelists, who were anxious to return home and whose influence Europeans could canalise towards the reformation of the African Society. Such was the background to much of the missionary effort and ambition of the middle of the 19th century.

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1. John Venn was rector of Clapham from 1792 till his death in 1813. Henry Venn was born in 1796. (D.N.B.)
 2. The change may be dated from the publication of T.F. Buxton's, *The African Slavery*, (1839) and its *Remedy*, 1840. (See J. Gallagher, *Fowell Buxton and the New Africa Policy*, in *Cambridge Historical Journal*, Vol.xi, 1950).

Missionaries who set out to change a people's religion and beliefs are, by definition, reformers and they must be regarded as Developers. Nevertheless, there were many missionaries who denied that they had any business promoting civilisation in other countries. The idea of the English Developers was in fact not so much missionary as mid-Victorian. It arose partly out of the influence that the Abolitionists exerted upon the thinking of Englishmen towards Africans, and partly out of the confidence of the Victorians in their progress and civilisation and the conviction that if other people were to progress it must be in the direction of imitating that Victorian civilisation. Henry Venn, however, brought to bear on the pre-conceived ideas of his age a fresh, vigorous mind reacting on the events and personalities of not only West Africa but also India, Ceylon and other missionary fields of the C.M.S. whose affairs he followed closely for so long. He accepted the new programme of the Abolitionists, as he did those of the Evangelicals; but his ideas were more than just a reflection of the wishes of his Church or the prejudices of his age. His primary task was to evolve a policy for the direction of the work of the C.M.S. missionaries and the organisation of the new Churches they were founding. He saw to it that he did this in a manner likely to advance the programme of the Abolitionists and then he outlined what government and private individuals could do to carry out the rest of the programme.

His ideas on native Church organisation can be briefly summarised.¹ The Missionary Society he says in effect, is an organisation with limited funds, but unlimited fields to cover. Its aim must be to create "self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating" churches. The missionary arrives in the field, sent out and maintained by the Society. His first converts should be organised in little bands under leaders and should start as soon as possible to make contributions to a Native Church Fund separate from the funds of the Missionary Society. Soon the bands should come together and form a congregation under a native catechist whom they should endeavour to

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1. There are four important papers drawn up by Venn and issued by the General Committee of the C.M.S. as "Instructions to the Missionaries": on the Organisation of Native Churches 1851; July 1861; January 1866; and on Nationality, June 1866. (*Memoirs of Henry Venn*, 1880 edition, pp.282-335). Venn's ideas on this subject developed with time, especially as a result of his correspondence with Rev. Rufus Anderson, Secretary of the American Foreign Missions Board (cf. his *Theory of Missions to the Heathen*, Boston 1845; *Foreign Missions, their Relations and Claims*, Boston 1869). They both agreed on the distinctive rôles of pastor and missionary, but not on the training of the pastor. Anderson would have him "unspoilt"; Venn at first tacitly agreed, saying that the best of the pastors could graduate into missionaries and be "trained"; but as his estimation of the rôle of the pastors grew, he revised this: the leading pastors must be well-trained, remain pastors, evolve a national church and eventually become bishops. I have quoted mostly from Venn's final views.

maintain. Soon the catechist or other suitable native should be ordained pastor and the missionary can then move on to fresh ground. Thenceforth, the missionary is "to exercise his influence *ab extra*, prompting and guiding the native pastors to lead their flocks, and making provision for the supply for the native Church of catechist, pastors or evangelists". The missionary, that is, was with foreign funds to bring up a native pastorate, but must not himself be the pastor. The pastor must be of the people and maintained by them. That is to say Venn rejected the Sierra Leone practice where European missionaries acted as pastors and everything was done to conform to the English pattern. Similarly, he rejected the other extreme that because the pastor must not be cut off from his flock, he must be stuck to their social standards. "The native teacher", he said, "should not be too highly raised above his countrymen in his habits and mode of living. . (but) he must always be a little ahead of the civilisation of the people around him and by his example and influence lead that civilisation forward."¹ Indeed at least a few of the pastors must be well-educated and able to organise the different congregations into a native Church under its own Bishop. "Let a native Church be organised as a national institution. . . . As the native Church assumes a national character, it will ultimately supersede the denominational distinctions which are now introduced by Foreign Missionary Societies. . . Every national Church is at liberty to change its ceremonies, and adapt itself to the national taste." But that must be the work of the native pastorate. The temptation for European missionaries to assume the rôle of the pastor must be resisted, for, "such a scheme, even if the means were provided, would be too apt to create a feeble and dependent native Christian community".²

These ideas fitted well into the Abolitionists' programme. The reformation of life in Africa was to be carried out by immigrants from Sierra Leone and Brazil and the Christian converts. What they needed was encouragement, training, guidance, *ab extra*. Venn believed that it was both Britain's duty and opportunity to provide this. And to this end he suggested that the government should not only continue to maintain the armed patrol at sea but should also build a few more forts on the coast in places like Badagry or better still Lagos. Based on these coastal enclaves, there should be a system of Consuls and Vice-Consuls resident at each of the important towns. For example, it was not enough that there should be just a Consul at Lagos. When largely through his intervention, Kosoko had been replaced by the more amenable Akitoye and a Consul had been appointed to Lagos, he asked the government to go a step further and appoint a Vice-Consul at Abeokuta barely 60 miles away.

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1. Instructions to Townsend, Gollmer & Crowther, Oct. 25th 1844. (C.M.S. CA2/LI).
 2. Memoirs, pp. 285-7.

When Lord Clarendon, the Colonial Secretary, demurred saying that the trade was not large enough to justify the extra expense and that in any case the Consul in Lagos could well look after the interests of Britain at Abeokuta, Venn was not satisfied. To him the consul was not so much the guardian of the interests of a foreign country as a secular missionary, an advisory Resident, a kind of an idealised Maclean. With Lord Clarendon's blessing, he appointed at C.M.S. expense a surgeon of the Royal Navy, Edward Irving, to "execute the office" of Consul at Abeokuta until the government would be willing to appoint an official consul. Of great relevance here are the instructions Venn drew up for Irving. He was to:—

"co-operate with the missionaries in ameliorating the social, political and commercial condition of the Native Tribes....

"advise Chiefs...respecting the principles of law and sound policy .. so that right principles of law and justice should supply a better foundation than that which is crumbling away..

"be a counsellor of the chiefs in respect of their military policy and warfare .. thus securing their town from sudden attacks.. and to dissuade them from aggressive warfare".

Finally, he was to advise and guide

"the Sierra Leone people especially, as British subjects, and the Christians of Abeokuta, so that these parties may rise in social position and influence while they are receiving Christian instruction and thus form themselves into a self-supporting Christian Church and give practical proof that godliness hath promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come".¹

In other words, Irving was to guide, advise and strengthen the chiefs, but he was not to supersede them. More than that, he was to help the Sierra Leone Immigrants and the Christians and educated elements to become a middle class between the chiefs and the working populace and to become leaders of the movement to reform their own society.

This desire to encourage the growth of an African middle class was the keynote of Venn's policy of development. With him, it was not enough that trade with Europe should increase; the increase of trade was not valuable unless it led to social change and the rise of the middle class. Only if it did so would it help to eradicate African slavery permanently. For, he argued, African slavery was based on a subsistence economy where chiefs for want of what to do with man-power sold it cheap to Europeans. Slavery would never be eradicated unless a new class of people not satisfied with mere subsistence were to arise to upset the old system, in the same way that the industrial revolution in Europe produced the men who upset

1. Venn to Edward Irving, March 29th 1853 (C.M.S. CA2/LI).

the mercantilist system on which the European slave trade had been based. Venn believed that the coastal palm oil trade was a classic example of how increase in trade by itself was valueless. It was developing all the time but it did not lead to a social revolution and an economic as distinct from mere commercial development. Under the Trust system by which the European traders gave capital to the coastal chiefs to bring down palm oil from the interior, the European trade in palm oil merely bolstered up the position and the monopoly of the chiefs, perpetuated slavery and, like the three centuries of European trade in slaves before it, was having virtually no social effects locally. Venn argued that there must be a deliberate commercial and industrial policy directed to break the system and to offer inducements to encourage the rise of a middle class and hence the re-organisation of African society. For example, European traders must not just remain on the coast and ask African chiefs to bring them produce; they must train new African agents who would establish stations in the interior and "call forth" the resources of the land. That is to say, European traders must work through a new middle class and by their technical training help to create and foster such a class.

Venn was, however, convinced that the short term economic motives of private traders could not be relied upon to achieve the social and economic development he was seeking. For one thing, he argued, "the climate prevents the influx of European capital into Africa, European merchants upon the coast of Africa seek quick returns and large profits on small consignments such as gold-dust, ivory, palm oil. They have thought it beneath their notice to look out for large consignments with small profits though such commerce may of course be more beneficial to the native producer".¹ Secondly, he said, "the object of European traders . . . is to obtain the produce of Africans for the least possible consideration at the cheapest rate. They prefer to deal with savages whom they can cajole into parting with their goods for beads and rum rather than to deal with civilized and intelligent races who can compete with them in the markets of Europe". For the social development of Africa, he added, a class of Africans must be created

"to act as Principals in the commercial transactions, to take them out of the hands of European traders . . . a large body of such Native independent Growers of cotton and traders . . . who may form an intelligent and influential class of Society and

1. Venn, *West African Colonies*, Lond. 1865: pamphlet originally submitted as a memorandum to Colonel Ord, Sole Commissioner into the finances of the West African Settlements, 1864.

become the founders of a kingdom which shall render incalculable benefits to Africa and hold a position amongst the states of Europe".¹

What was needed to produce such a class of people, he said elsewhere, was not just increase of trade, but a "paternal government" that would protect and encourage them, give attention to crops like indigo, arrowroot, and especially cotton, promote welfare measures instead of relying on the laissez-faire policy of the mid-19th century economists.

The problem was where to get the paternal government. Venn could always rely on having a sympathetic hearing from Lords Palmerston, Russell or Clarendon; and, where the slave trade or British commercial interests were more directly concerned, he often secured action as in the maintenance of the armed patrol on the coast, the occupation of Lagos in 1851 and the close scrutiny of the administration set up there after 1861. Indeed, Earl Grey's description of the policy of Lord Russell's government on the Gold Coast shows that some at least of the ministers shared many of Venn's ideas. This policy, said Earl Grey, was

"to keep constantly in sight the formation of a regular government on the European model, and the establishment of a civilised polity as the goal ultimately to be attained; but, in the endeavour to arrive at it, taking care that each successive step shall appear to the people themselves as nothing more than the natural mode of providing for some want, or remedying some evil, which they practically feel at the moment. . . . The real interest of this country is gradually to train the inhabitants of this part of Africa in the arts of civilisation and government".²

But in fact Venn was thinking too far ahead of the government and it could be argued that you could not really begin to have social and economic development until overseas trade had first been expanded. Nevertheless, Venn began to put his theories into practice, largely through the missionaries, a few individual traders, naval officers and like minded colonial governors. For example, in his effort to develop the production of cotton along the lines indicated above, he tried to appeal to the economic interests of Lancashire. But it was not easy to break the established pattern of trade by which Liverpool merchants who dealt with West Africa took cotton goods out and brought palm oil back. Until the American Civil War, the only consistent effort to try out Venn's ideas came from a single merchant, Thomas Clegg, "one of those laymen of the Church of England who form its real strength". He agreed to provide capital in the form of cotton, saw gins and presses and to give technical training to

1. Venn to Henry Robbin, 22nd Jan. 1857 (C.M.S., CA2/L2).

2. Earl Grey, *The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration* (1853) ii, p. 286.

selected African youths on how to use them and to handle cotton for the European market. He was not to give Trust, but to pay only when cotton was delivered to him. He promised to act "simply to benefit the natives and to secure no more profit to himself than a bare commission upon the transactions". Missionaries on the spot were asked to encourage the farmers to grow more cotton, and to supervise the young men in charge of the warehouses. Laird supported the scheme through his African Steamship Company which began in 1853 to offer regular transport between West Africa and England and undertook to take cargoes from small African traders.

Apart from constantly urging upon the government the claims of this incipient middle class, Venn endeavoured through mission schools and other channels to see to their education so as to fit them for their appointed rôle of reformers. They were to be no idle intelligensia. They needed to be trained rigorously in agriculture and industry. Venn was always criticising the various administrations on the coast for their inaction in this respect. In Sierra Leone, for example, nothing was done to encourage agriculture. Freetown depended on neighbouring peoples for the rice it ate and in the event of war, it had to rely on Indian rice imported through England. No wonder there was a feeling that the population was too large for the resources of the colony and pressure was being put on some of the Liberated Africans to emigrate to the West Indies when they could have been trained in Sierra Leone to spread British influence and civilisation in West Africa. There was an inherent dislike of agriculture, said Venn, in "the free men of the British colonies", but a paternal government "should have supplied a remedy by establishing model farms, by prizes to successful producers of agricultural produce, by public warehouses where small farmers might store their goods for shipment, and by various other modes of instruction and encouragement."¹ Venn complained that education was left wholly in the hands of missionaries. Quantitatively, their achievement was impressive. The census of Sierra Leone in 1860 revealed that 22% of the population were at school (as compared with 16% in Prussia and 13% in England), and all except one were mission schools and training colleges. But such schools were unable to give the technical and industrial training that was needed. They were poor, ill-staffed, ill-equipped, and they had either to be self-supporting or to offer such popular, purely academic subjects like Latin, Greek and Mathematics as would attract rich fee payers.² Education, said Venn, even more than commerce, ought not to be left to economic motives alone. Deliberate policy and action and extra expenditure were needed if the schools were to help to achieve the type of social revolution Venn was looking for. Venn tried hard especially in the

1. Venn: *West African Colonies*, op. cit., p. 32.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

new schools in Yorubaland and on the Niger to break the Sierra Leone tradition of a wholly literary education. In 1853, for example, he sent Mr. R. Paley, a young Cambridge graduate, to go and turn the Abeokuta Training Institution into a model self-supporting institution where learning will be combined with industrial labour in the manner of the Basle missionaries on the Gold Coast.¹ To Paley's successor Venn wrote: "The separation of scholastic life and manual labour is a refinement of advanced civilisation. It may be doubted whether even in this case it is desirable, but certainly it is not desirable in mission schools or according to the example of the great Apostle of the Gentiles"². But frequent deaths and insufficiency of funds were great handicaps. The institution organised a system of apprenticeship, and trained a few carpenters, tailors, printers, brick-makers and masons. But it did not become as popular as its offshoot, the Lagos Grammar School, wholly literary, ministering to the needs of the commercial elements in Lagos. But Venn went beyond the mission schools in his effort to give his rising middle class a varied practical training. He got some "Friends of Africa"—Sir Robert Inglis, T. A. Acland, E. N. Buxton and others—to form a "Native Agency Committee"³ to send out at their expense European artisans to work in Africa in collaboration with the missionaries and to bring African youths to English factories and workshops to train. Individual African merchants and mission agents were also encouraged to give their children similar education. It ought to be emphasised that of all the young men who thus passed through Venn's hands, only one went for a purely literary course—T. B. Macaulay, who read Arts at King's College, London, and later founded the Lagos Grammar School. Another, Samuel Crowther (jnr.) read Chemistry and Anatomy at the same College as part of a medical training. Two went to Thomas Clegg; two others at Manchester learnt brick and tile-making and building construction; two went to Kew Gardens to study what plants might be introduced into Africa; one learnt printing in London. The Admiralty was prevailed upon to authorise the ships of the naval squadron to take on boys to train in Navigation so that they could become merchant captains. Thus Captain R. Coote trained the Davies brothers for two years and Commodore Wilmot trained four other boys on board the *Rattlesnake* from 1863-65. Others were to be trained to qualify as naval surgeons. Only three are known to have been sent to Scotland for the training and of these two qualified.⁴ These men were not intended for mission work; in fact they were encouraged to be independent men in society who like the lay members of the C.M.S.

1. Venn to Townsend, Dec. 2nd 1852 (C.M.S. CA2/L1).

2. Venn to W. Markham, Jan. 29th 1856 (C.M.S. CA2/L2).

3. Formed 1845 (Memoirs, p. 540).

4. Information about this training scheme is scattered. The most useful single source is C.M.S. CA1/023. Besides this, see personal files of Capt.

would carry the influence of the Church into business and politics.

Venn's ideas on education show that he knew better than to attempt to make white men out of black. His attitude can perhaps best be summed up in the words of the Instructions he drew up for Dr. Harrison. Harrison was told, among other things, to try to train a few young men in the elements of medical and surgical science. But he was to look for youths who have already shown an inclination for the subject and have some knowledge of native medicine.¹ In other words, the way to create a modern African doctor was to take a native herbalist and develop him by giving him a training in European scientific method. And it is a fundamental point that he placed emphasis on the African languages. Within five years of Macaulay's masterful minute on Education—that he knew no one who “could deny that a single shelf of a good European Library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia”²—Venn was urging Crowther to undertake the translation of the Bible to Yoruba and to start to preach in Yoruba even while still at Freetown. Reducing the various African vernaculars into writing and developing native literatures was to be first step in the reforming movement. Venn personally with the help of German and English linguists tackled the question of a system of orthography not only for Yoruba but, if possible, for all African languages. He made it obligatory for missionaries to acquire the language of the region they served and to teach it in the primary schools. The Bible he said was for the many and few would be able or care to acquire other languages than the vernacular.

In conclusion, it should be repeated that, by and large, Venn lacked the political backing to give reality to his ideas. Many of his contemporaries approved of his principles but did little to put them into practice. Britain did not then directly control much of West Africa and by the end of the century when Britain did assume control over wide areas she followed largely a policy of preservation and laissez-faire until after the second World War when Venn's ideas were again re-echoed in the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. Nevertheless the ideas elaborated by Venn are important in the history of West Africa. In a piece-meal fashion, through the C.M.S. and other missionary societies, through ministers like Palmerston, Russell and Clarendon, merchants like Laird and Clegg, Venn did work to see the rise of a new middle class in West Africa. Men of this class were reared on Venn's ideas and the ideas therefore became the yardstick by which the actions of later British administrators were criticised.

J. P. L. Davies, Rev. T. B. Macaulay, Rev. H. Robbin, S. Crowther (Jnr.), etc., and *African Times* (London) for March 23rd 1865.

1. Venn to Dr Harrison, Jan. 22nd 1861. (C.M.S. CA2/L3).
2. Minute by Macaulay, 2nd Feb. 1835, cit. *From Empire to Commonwealth*, ed. J. Simmons, p. 87.

In other words, Venn's principles became an important strand in the thinking of early West African nationalists. The links may be illustrated in the history of one family. One of the two men that Venn sent to Kew Gardens, not taking easily to botanical studies, later became a catechist in Ibadan. Of his four sons, one after studying at Fourah Bay and at the University of Beirut became an archdeacon at Lokoja; another, a well-known pastor in Lagos; a third, the pastor of Oyo who wrote the *History of the Yoruba*; and a fourth became a medical doctor in Lagos and a prominent member of the Lagos Institute where he was arguing in 1901:

"You exploit the country with foreign capital and say you have developed its resources. When capital has deducted its Principal and interest, and the shipping its profit, precious little is left for the country and it is that little that is the real local wealth"¹

This new class of men so prominent in Lagos are often said to have discredited Venn's policy. But Lagos can hardly be regarded as an ideal ground to test the policy. There, African political power was destroyed and a British one established in its stead in which Africans had no place. As Venn told Governor Freeman as early as 1863, "many of those Europeans who had long been rivals in trade were at once exalted to places of authority and profit while no steps were taken to bring such advantages within reach of natives".² The Lagos educated Africans were not just 'spoil' men; they were also frustrated and disgruntled. There are two better grounds on which to base an estimate of Venn's ideas. The first is the connection of the present generation of public men in West Africa with the mission schools, sometimes even directly with the men actually trained by Venn. The second is the influence that such men acquired over affairs outside Lagos before the policy of Indirect Rule edged them out. There were, for example, Bishop Crowther and his sons on the Niger and in the Delta, Samuel Johnson at Oyo and Bishop Phillips at Ondo. But the classic example was at Abeokuta. There, the men Irving and the missionaries were asked to foster became an important and influential class. By the late 1860's there was intense rivalry between them and the European missionaries for political influence. Rising opposition at Abeokuta to the British administration in Lagos favoured the African middle class. Led by G. W. Johnson, they began gradually to acquire enough political power to carry out reforms like regular customs in place of tolls, postal communications with nearby towns, changes in the legal system, and so on. The history of the Egba United Board of Management and the

1. Hon. Dr O. Johnson reported in *Proceedings of the Inaugural Meeting of the Lagos Institute* (Lagos 1902) p. 26. His brothers were Archdeacon Henry Johnson, Rev. Nathaniel Johnson, and Rev. Samuel Johnson.

2. Venn to Freeman, October 23rd 1863 (C.M.S. CA2/L2).

Egba United Government, their attempts to carry out a social and political revolution at Abeokuta¹ without destroying the Egba national character, and their struggle to maintain their independence against the encroaching Lagos administration till as late as 1914—these breathe more of the spirit of Venn than does the Lugard picture of a Lagos intelligensia bred to arrogance and indolence.

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1. See S. O. Biobaku, *The Egba and their Neighbours*, Oxford, 1957, pp. 79-86, 98-99. Also *An Historical Sketch of Egba Traditional Authorities in Africa.*, Vol. 22, 1952.

NOTES ON SOME DOCUMENTS IN WHICH LAGOS IS REFERRED TO BY THE NAME 'ONIM' AND WHICH MENTION RELATIONS BETWEEN ONIM AND BRAZIL.

Submitted by

PIERRE VERGER

IT APPEARS that the name *Onim* which up to the middle of last century was used to indicate Lagos has nowadays been almost¹ completely forgotten. Documents² in various archives which I have consulted unanimously record, however, that the name *Onim*, with some variations, was applied to the island and town which the Europeans called Lagos and the Yoruba, Eko.

References to Onim in Eighteenth Century Documents

In "A list of Portuguese ships which have entered this Island of Principe from 1760 to the present time, 1771"³ the ships are recorded as having come from *Ony*.

Mr. Olivier de Montaguère, the last but one Director of the French Fort, St. Louis de Grégoy, at Wydah, in his report to the Administration Royale at Versailles dated 25 June 1786, wrote as follows:—⁴ "... *Aunis* at the mouth of the Curamos (or Lagos) river which marks the westernmost point of the Bay embracing the Benin (or Formoso) river and the Forcados river and extending to the Formoso cape. The King of *Aunis* is subject to the King of Benin and cannot exercise his office without first having paid tribute to him. The greater part of the trade of the chief of *Aunis* comes from Benin the boundaries of which end at that place."

In the same year, on 6 September 1786, Mr. de Champagny, in his account of some places visited by the corvette "Pandoux", wrote:—⁵

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1. It is mentioned by Sir Alan Burns — *History of Nigeria* (footnote to p.36), while Talbot points out that one of the names for the town was "*Aonin*" or "*Awani*", corrupted later to "*Oni*" by Europeans, probably connected with the word "*Ini*" or "*Bini*".
Talbot, *Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, Vol. 1. p. 80.
 2. Arquivo Publico, Bahia, Brazil (A.P.B.); Arquivo da Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (B.N.R.); Archives Nationales, Paris (A.N.P.); Arquivo Historico Ultramarino, Lisbon (A.H.U.).
 3. A.H.U. (São Tomé, Caixa 7).
 4. A.N.P. (Col. C 6/26).
 5. Ibid.

"*Honis* is the last place along the whole of that coast which most seamen incorrectly call "Côte Poo". *Honis* can only provide enough cargo for a small number of ships every year. It is a most unhealthy place and offers nothing of sufficient importance to attract one to settle there."

Relations between Bahia and Onim in the early Nineteenth Century

Innocencio Marques de Sant'Anna, "a coloured man in the crew of the Portuguese corvette *Diana*"¹ was taken prisoner at Porto-Novo by the troops of the King of Dahomey, held captive by him, and returned to Bahia and Lisbon in 1804 as interpreter for an embassy sent by Adandozan, the King of Dahomey, to the Prince Regent, D. João.² He later wrote a report³ from Bahia on 17 October 1805 in which he urged Portugal to abandon its commerce with the King of Dahomey in favour of the King of Ardra:- "Your Excellency will be aware that to form a friendship with the King of Ardra will mean an abundance of slaves and that you will thus become master of the ports of Apê, Porto-Novo, Badagry, *Onim* and the whole of that coast."

Two years later, on 7 October 1807, the Conde da Ponte, Governor of Bahia, wrote⁴ to the Visconde de Anadia at the Lisbon Court announcing the arrival in Bahia on 1st October of the brig "*Thalia*" which had come from the West African coast and which had on board an Ambassador and his secretary sent by Prince Ajan of the Kingdom of *Oynim*. The Governor stated that he was sending this news by the first boat, the "*Serra*", sailing for Lisbon on 7 October 1807 and that up to the time of writing he had not received the ambassadors since it was necessary to provide them with clothes: he thus did not yet know the purpose of their embassy.

The Governor of Bahia had as his adviser Innocencio Marques de Sant'Anna who had now been given the honorary post of Captain of the fourth regiment of coloured troops in Bahia⁵ and a salary equivalent to that of an Infantry Captain. Special services were expected of Innocencio because of his familiarity with the West African coast and because of his knowledge of the language spoken there. He had long been persuading the Governor to establish trade with the King of Ardra⁶ through Porto-Novo. It appears he had also prejudiced him unfavourably against the Kingdom of *Onim* for the Governor

1. A.P.B. (C.G. to S.M., Vol.9, f.499).
2. A.H.U. (Bahia, 27, 100).
3. A.H.U. (Bahia, 27,486).
4. A.P.B. (C.G. to S.M., Vol. 11, f.102).
5. B.N.R. (II.34-5-4).
6. vide footnote 3.

stated further in his letter to Lisbon:— “...but I can first assure Your Excellency that this Prince Ajan is one of the least trustworthy on that Coast and that the people one finds for sale there are only traded because none can be found from elsewhere—they are of the worst quality and are called “Nagô”. The ambassadors are being housed in the São Francisco monastery and in accordance with the instructions given to my predecessor, I shall see that they let me have the letters for His Royal Highness.”¹

By the next mail, taken to Lisbon on 24 October 1807 by the *Galère Americana*, the Governor of Bahia wrote:—² “On the eleventh day of this month the emissaries of Ajan, Prince of *Onim*, presented themselves and were ceremoniously received in the same way as my predecessor received the envoys of Dagomé (King of Dahomey) in 1804. In accordance with the instructions they had received from their Prince they said nothing about the purpose of their embassy but handed me a personal letter from him. Their instructions, as far as I was concerned, were to see that I complied with the requests contained in his letter. I then urged them to entrust to me the letter from their Prince to my Sovereign so that I might forward it. I said that in accordance with the orders given to my Government if they did not hand over this letter their passage to Lisbon would not be granted and they would have to go back without having accomplished their business. They replied that they would consult together at their residence and give me an answer. Yesterday, 13 October, they sent their interpreter to confirm that they could only deliver the letter personally to His Royal Highness and that if their passage to Lisbon were not granted unless they handed the letter over to me they would inform their Prince and wait here for further orders. Through the same interpreter I told them that I would not grant them the passage they requested and that in view of the difficulty they had encountered in trying to carry out the orders they had received and the fact that permission to stay in this town (Bahia) was only granted to persons who had handed over letters from their embassies for Lisbon and were awaiting replies, they must themselves return to *Onim* by the first available boat.

When I sent them this message I already had in my hand the true copy of Prince Ajan's letter to His Royal Highness, Our Lord Prince Regent. I enclose it herewith. A glance at its contents, Your Excellency, will reveal the trifling matter they are seeking to negotiate and that there is nothing in it relevant to trade with those ports or which would be to the interests of the Royal Finances.

The King of *Onim* is a subject of the King of Benin; the latter chooses him and names him King. Because of this subjection the bones of the deceased King of *Onim* have to be taken before the

1. B.N.R. (II, 34-5-4).

2. A.P.B. (C.G. to S.M., Vol. 11, f.109).

King of Benin and he will not proceed with a new election unless this ceremony has been performed. Prince Ajan is the son of the deceased King; he governs in the interim but has not yet been elected King as this rite has not been performed.

Trade in the Port of *Onim* is a result of the wars between Dagomé (King of Dahomey) and the King of Porto-Novo and the consequent failure of the inhabitants of Apù and Badagry to abide by their contracts with the inhabitants of the interior, subjects of the Empire of Ayôno and other Potentates. This has driven trade towards the Port of *Onim* obliging our ships, for lack of slaves in the ports mentioned, to go right down the Coast to the port in question. At first, business prospects were attractive but the large number of ships which flooded the country with tobacco have quickly made things the same as, if not worse than, elsewhere. It is necessary to pay thirteen to fourteen rolls per head when seven or eight years ago they were valued at five or six. The Prince then in power in the country used to receive the Portuguese very well indeed but today he delays shipments on a thousand pretexts and multiplies the payments he exacts from the captains without which he will not allow them to trade.....

I have had the prospects of the whole of that coast between Monte Diabo and the Benin Coast examined by Captain Innocencio Marques who is very well acquainted with those regions.... It would be profitable to enter into an agreement with the King of Ardra and Porto-Novo which would be mutually advantageous and thus last some time. But as regards Prince Ajan, it is most unfortunate for him that he has spent so much in food and transport on his useless envoys. I have now decided to make them leave by the first possible ship."

Two days later, the Governor of Bahia wrote a letter to Prince Ajan¹ which began grandiloquently thus:— "João de Saldanha da Gamma e Mello e Torres Guedes e Brito Conde da Ponte, do Conselho de Sua Alteza Real, Senhor da Villa de Assequin, Comendador da Orden de Christo, Governador e Capitão General da Capitania da Bahia, informs the Prince of *Onim*..... He greatly commends the steadfast way in which the Ambassadors of the Prince of *Onim* strictly abided by the orders which they had received..... And it is his duty to point out to the Prince of *Onim* that honest transactions with our ships in his Port, and goodwill on the part of the Prince himself towards the loading of the said ships would be the proper way of ensuring his Ambassadors a warm welcome by Our Lord Prince Regent."

On 23 October the Governor of Bahia informed the Lisbon Court² that Prince Ajan's envoys had embarked the previous evening on the brig "São Jozé Deligente" for their return voyage to *Onim* and he

1. A.P.B. (C.G. to V. A., Vol. 20, f. 62).

2. A.P.B. (C.G. to S.M., Vol. 11, f. 115).

gave His Excellency the following account of what really lay behind their embassy. "The Master of the brig 'Thalia' found himself in great danger of losing his business owing to the bad quality of his cargo of tobacco. He and the Pilot therefore employed shady methods to remedy this situation. They convinced the Prince that if he sent envoys to Bahia future prospects would be extremely bright for him and they offered to transport such envoys free of charge. This had the desired result—their ship's business was favourably transacted and they also obtained exemption from the royal dues which amounted to four contos and several thousand reis for four hundred odd slaves; this largely compensated for the expense incurred in connection with the envoys' keep." The Governor said he had learned all this at the outset from the ship's Pilot who had brought the envoys to him and served as their interpreter and confidant.

None of these letters was destined to be received at the Lisbon Court for the Prince Regent, D. João, followed by his ministers, his Court and officials, in flight from Napoleon's troops who were invading Portugal, had hastily put to sea. Fifteen ships left Lisbon on 29 November, 1807. One part of this fleet, seeking refuge from A storm, put in to Bahia on 22 January 1808; the ship carrying the Prince Regent was among them and continued its voyage to Rio de Janeiro two months later. Meanwhile on 21st March the Conde da Ponte was sending off under the care of an attaché, Colonel Jozé Antonio do Passo, a pigmy (sic), the gift of Prince Ajan of the Kingdom of *Onim* to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent.¹

The Prince of *Onim's* Ambassadors were destined to reappear at Bahia much sooner than the Governor could have believed possible.² The brig "São Jozé Deligente" which was carrying them back "had the misfortune to be captured by a French frigate. The Master and Pilot of the brig were replaced by Frenchmen who steered their prize towards the island of Santiago. On arrival there they encountered an English brig flying a French flag from the stern and a Portuguese flag from the prow. The English brig recaptured the "São Jozé Deligente" and conveyed it to the island. With the consent of the governor of the island, and after a payment of nine hundred thousand reis and two oxen, the "São Jozé Deligente" returned to this city (Bahia) with the Ambassadors on board; on 17 May 1808, they were once again installed in the São Francisco monastery waiting to be sent back to *Onim* at the first opportunity. The Governor once again bewailed the expense caused by such envoys." Finally, a month later on 18 June, he wrote another letter³ to the Prince of *Onim*, the first having been lost in the course of these latter events.

1. A.P.B. (C.G. to S.M., Vol.12, f.77).

2. A.P.B. (C.G. to S.M., Vol.12, f.108).

3. A.P.B. (C.G. to V.A., Vol.19, f.200).

The name *Onim* reappears in correspondence between the Governor of Bahia and the Court of the Prince Regent installed at Rio de Janeiro concerning the threat made by the King of Oere (Warri) to the Governor of the islands of São Thomé and Príncipe.¹ The King of Oere complained that one Jozé Malaquias owed him for eighty slaves and that if he were not paid within one year he would seize all Portuguese ships which appeared in his port or in the port of *Onim*. Luis Joaquim Lisboa, Governor of the islands of São Thomé and Príncipe, in forwarding the letter from the King of Oere (Warri) to the Government of Bahia, sent a covering letter² in which it was clearly stated that *Onim* was known also as Lagos.

The name *Onim* was also used by an Englishman writing about the Vulcano do Sul Affair.³ "Edward Hughes Jacob made oath that he, the appearer, First Lt. of H.M. Ship "Pheasant", beingcruising in the Bight of Benin on the 6th of October 1819. discovered at daylight a Brig which endeavoured to avoid, and escape from, H. M.said Ship; that between ten and eleven o'clock at night on the said day, H.M. said Ship having approached near the said Brig, guns were fired for the purpose of bringing her to, and she did accordingly bring to, She was a Portuguese Brig called "Volcano do Sul", having on board a cargo of 270 slaves taken on board at *Ohne*, near the river Lagos on the said coast of Africa, and was bound with such a cargo to the Port of Saint Salvador (Bahia) in Brazil. Captain Kelly of the "Pheasant" having determined to detain the said Brig and to send her to Sierra Leone for adjudication, appointed a Midshipman and four men as prize master and men. . . ."

Since then nothing more was heard until the day when "in a port near Bahia, the slave-ship "Vulcano do Sul" successfully disembarked on the mainland all the negroes she carried and her crew subsequently succeeded in dispersing. There are grave suspicions that a massacre of the English crew took place on board."⁴

The records of the Maritime Police in Bahia refer⁵ to a passport, number 250, issued on 30 May 1818 to the brig "Vulcano do Sul" (Master, João Luis Alvarez, Owner Nobre and nephew) to proceed to Cabinda and back to negotiate for slaves. This clearly reveals the machinery behind this clandestine trade namely that official papers were issued in respect of ports which lay to the South of the Equator thus complying with the conventions of 1815, but that in actual fact the ships went to Wydah or *Onim*.

1. A.P.B. (C.G. to S.M., Vol. 13, f. 544).
2. A.P.B. (C.G. to S.M., Vol. 13, f. 540).
3. A.P.B. (O.R. 121, f. 121).
4. A.P.B. (O.R. 121, f. 119).
5. A.P.B. (P.de E.448).

References to *Onim* in Documents dating from 1823

Documents dating from 1823 would seem to indicate that relations between Brazil and the Kingdom of *Onim* were from then on established on a more dignified basis. This may perhaps be due to the following events. The Prince Regent had by that time become King under the title of João VI and had returned to Portugal; he had left Brazil on 26 April 1821, leaving his son Don Pedro as Regent. Brazil became independent on 7 September 1822 and Don Pedro was acclaimed Emperor of Brazil on 12 October.

An indication of the new status of diplomatic relations between Brazil and *Onim* is to be found in letters¹ written from Bahia by Colonel Manoel Alvarez Lima, Ambassador of the King of *Onim*, to the Emperor Pedro I at Rio de Janeiro. In the first of these letters he refers to an attempted countermove by the Portuguese against the Brazilians:—"On 31 March, an expedition consisting of nine Portuguese ships arrived in this Province (Bahia) carrying two battalions" From this letter it appears that the ambassador of the King of *Onim* had met King João VI of Portugal for he writes:—"I spoke in private with His Most Faithful Majesty, Father of Your Imperial Majesty. He urged me to visit Your Majesty. I find myself detained here and unable to leave. This Province is uninhabitable at the present time and I am not permitted to depart."

No further details about this mysterious "ambassador" of the King of *Onim* have been found apart from two references in the records of the Maritime Police in Bahia which mention his journeys to Africa and that on each occasion he was accompanied in grand style by five servants.² These references are dated 22 January and 23 November 1830 and read as follows:—"The Ambassador and Colonel, Manoel Alvarez Lima, is departing from this city for the West African Coast; he is taking with him five free servants, Francisco, João, Antonio, Joaquim and João da Silva, natives of the West African Coast, and Custodio dos Santos, a Creole. I decree that no difficulties shall impede his voyage. In confirmation of this I have sent him the present-letter under the seal and arms of the Empire. Signed by me. V. de C. Government Palace."

In addition to the above there are the following miscellaneous references to *Onim* after 1823.

The Abbé Pierre Bouche in his book on the Slave Coast makes these observations after passing Lagos:—" . . . the island of Lagos (locally called *Aouni*). . . ."³ "The town of Lagos (Eko) is built on the western part of the island of *Aouni*."⁴

1. B.N.R. (II, 33-28-54). B.N.R. (II, 33-29-1).

2. A.P.B. (Pass.7).

3. Pierre Bouche, *La Côte des Esclaves et le Dahomey*, Paris, 1885, p. 274.

4. *Ibid.*, p.278.

In the files of the Maritime Police in Bahia it is recorded that between 1826 and 1856 ships were departing for, and returning from, *Onim*. The name Lagos does not appear in these records except in the year 1854. After 1856 the name *Onim* disappears and is replaced by that of Lagos.

In the "Jornal da Bahia" of 9 January 1858 mention is made of some legal proceedings in which one Marcos Borges Ferraz was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for the crime of the illicit importation of Africans into Brazil in 1851 on board the schooner "Relampago". The judges did not accept the defence put forward by the accused who claimed that the ship belong to Kosoko, the King of *Onim*. In the same issue of this Journal the name Lagos appears in the notices of ships' departures. It is evident from this source then that the name *Onim* was still in use in 1851, the date of the legal proceedings, but that by 1858 it had been replaced by Lagos.

Conclusion

It would seem therefore that with the decline of Portuguese or Brazilian influence on this part of the West African Coast and with the rise of British influence the name Lagos became substituted for that of *Onim*.

Abbreviations:	C.G. to S.M.	—	Cartas do Governo a Sua Magestade
	C.G. to V.A.	—	Cartas do Governo a Varias Autoridades
	O.R.	—	Ordens Regiaes
	P. de E.	—	Passaportes de Embarcações
	Pass.	—	Passaportes

BOOK REVIEWS

A HISTORY OF WEST AFRICA,—for schools and colleges—By P. E. H. Hair, *Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., London, 1959. 5/-.*

A HISTORY OF WEST AFRICA,—for schools and colleges—TEACHER'S BOOK—By P. E. H. Hair, *Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., London, 1959. 9/-.*

IT HAS OFTEN been said that, because so little is generally known at present about West African history, those who are actively engaged on teaching and research in the universities should begin by writing textbooks for primary and secondary schools. A few university teachers are responding to the call, but the number of history lecturers and professors anxious to write school textbooks are not likely to be many. The reason is that the presentation of history for schools is more of a problem of teaching methods than of history, and the best history textbooks are likely to be produced not by those who know most about the history as by those who know best about the pupils. Yet at least for some time to come, university teachers in West African history must take some active interest in textbooks used in schools by discussing them in conferences with school teachers as well as by reviewing from time to time the history content of these books in the light of progressing research. That explains the purpose of this review of P. E. H. Hair's *A History of West Africa for Schools and Colleges*, with its companion volume, the *Teacher's Book*.

It must be said right away that these two books are likely to be very useful in schools. Paul Hair was a lecturer in history in the Teacher Training Department of Fourah Bay College. That is to say he knows his history and he has made a deep study of the needs of pupils and the problems of presenting history to them. His narrative is simple, imaginative and clear. He has taken pains over maps and drawings, though the drawings could have been made in bolder and clearer lines. For stimulating interest in history, apart from a short but valuable section of carefully selected extracts from diaries, autobiographies and monographs, the teacher's handbook contains many suggestions that may prove useful even at university level.

It must at the same time be added that the books have not succeeded in taking account of much of the progress that has been made in recent years in West African history. Pupils using them are still likely to persist in the old belief that there is very little history in West Africa before the Europeans came or outside the spheres of European activities. Out of 13 chapters covering 111 pages, there are only 2 brief chapters covering 21 pages on the pre-European history of West Africa: "The History of Our Ancestors", and "Traders and Settlers from North Africa". The Europeans arrive on page 22, and the rest of the book is a history of the activities of

European traders, missionaries and administrators, and the results of their work, including a few references to some West Africans mostly of the European period.

Paul Hair is probably not unaware of the advances already made in converting West African history from a history of the activities primarily of the European invaders into the history of the West African peoples themselves. But with the present nature of our knowledge and the many uncertainties, the presentation of the pre-European era of West African history raises many problems which he has not been able to solve. These problems ought increasingly to receive attention if the advances made at university level are to begin to reach down to the schools.

Two remarks of Paul Hair point to some of these problems. "The most colourful episodes traditionally associated with West African history," he says, "are either fictitious or misleading". Elsewhere, he adds, "For pupils in Primary schools, History should be largely STORY. . . . The simplest stories are often about only one person". The implication of these remarks is that only the phases of West African history written from documents where biographical material abounds will be suitable for schools. Even on the basis of this, Paul Hair may still be criticised for giving too little attention to the history of West African peoples written from Arabic documents. But if West African history will ever be properly taught in schools, one ought to go further and question whether legendary figures that emerge from oral tradition are really necessarily so "fictitious and misleading" that they ought to have no place in school textbooks. Or again, whether children cannot be made interested in stories about things, about traditional organisations and customs in addition to the stories about individuals. For in pre-European West African history, stories about legendary figures and dynasties, stories about iron and pottery and terra cotta heads, stories about chieftaincies and age-groups and secret societies will have to loom large and school teachers ought to begin to think not of cutting these out of the books, but of how best to interest their pupils in them.

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